Fighting Fantazine

THE FIGHTING FANTASY & GAMEBOOK FAN MAGAZINE

EDITING UP A STORM

AN INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR & WRITER ROBIN WATERFIELD

LOST IN TRANSLATION?

GAMEBOOKS IN ITALY

Starhunt: Void Slavers

A BRAND NEW **BUMPER** FIGHTING FANTASY ADVENTURE!

ISSUE 12
October 2013

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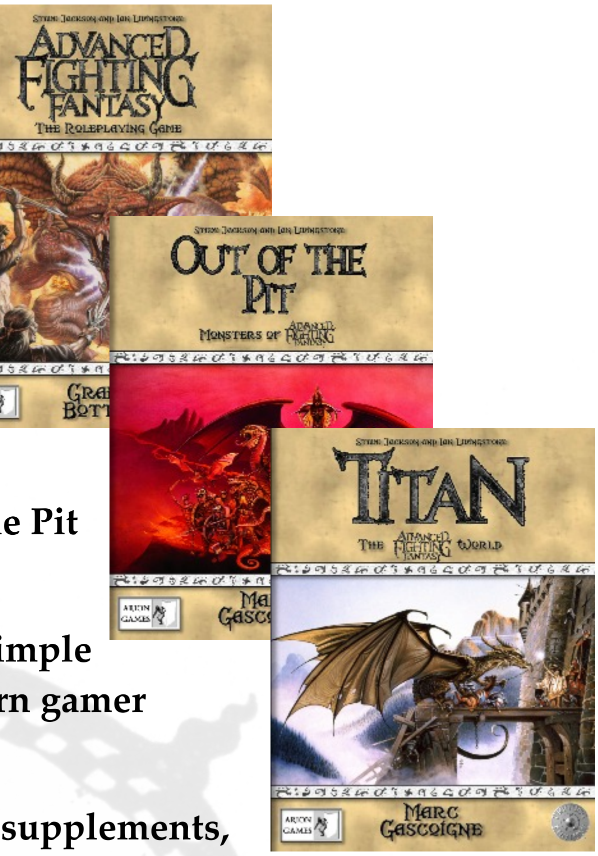
ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY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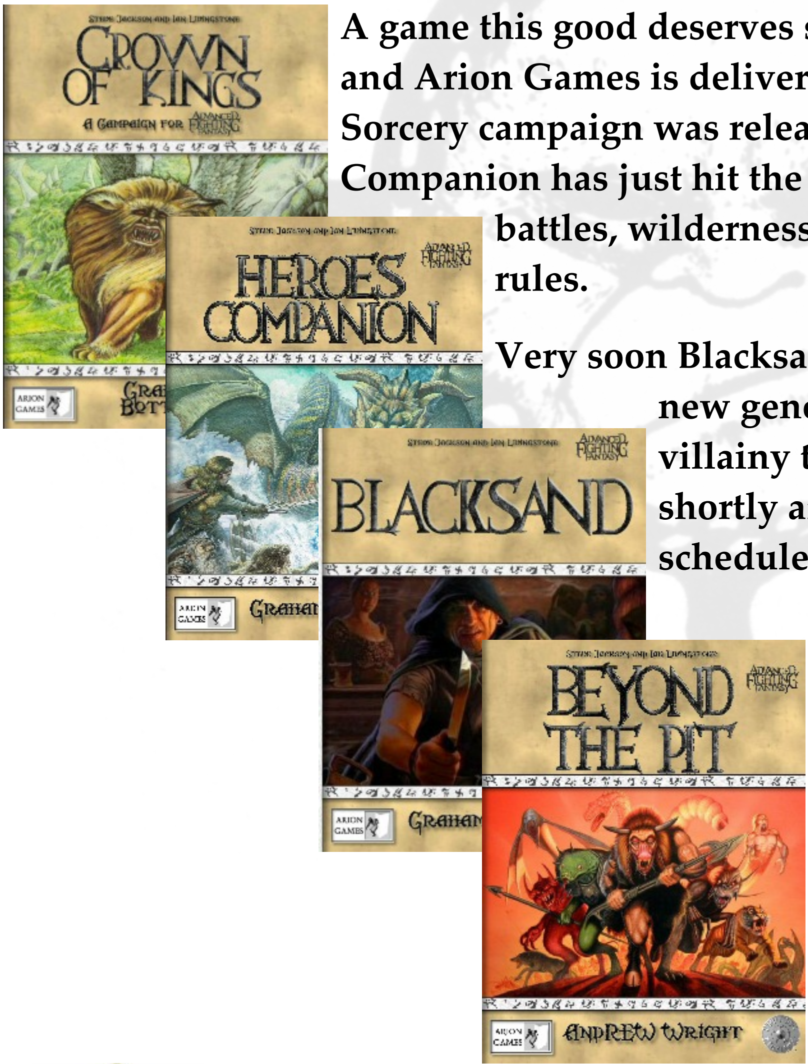
ARION GAMES
MARC GASCOIGNE

2011 saw the return of one of the classic British RPG's in Advanced Fighting Fantasy, Out of the Pit and Titan.

The release has proved very popular and this simple but deep game is now firmly back in the modern gamer psyche right across the world.


Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone
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HEROES COMPANION
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BEYOND THE PIT
ARION GAMES
ANDREW WRIGHT

A game this good deserves supplements, and Arion Games is delivering! The Sorcery campaign was released last year and the Heroes Companion has just hit the shops with new magic, mass battles, wilderness adventures and organisation rules.

Very soon Blacksand will be back, introducing a new generation to the pit of scum and villainy that is the infamous Port and shortly after that Beyond the Pit is scheduled for release with another huge batch of monsters and creatures.

This year should also see a whole swathe of extra releases, taking your Advanced Fighting Fantasy adventures into whole new regions!

FIGHTING FANTASY

Available from all good games stores or direct from Arion Games:

www.arion-games.com/store.html

ARION GAMES

We’re back –and it’s about time too.

It has been a bit longer in coming than anticipated, this issue. But hopefully that won’t detract from your enjoyment of the contents within!

We kick off with two interviews this issue, allowing us to go in two different directions. The first, with *Fighting Fantasy* alumni Robin Waterfield, looks back to what has been done and the second, with Nathan Penlington, looks at how people interact with the narrative fluidity of gamebooks through his interactive performance Choose Your Own Documentary™.

We’ve got a new sci-fi mini-adventure in this issue from the pen of Ian Brocklehurst and ably illustrated by Angela Salamaliki. The pair have been contributing the *Aelous Raven* story to the magazine for some time (as writer and artist respectively), so it is good for them to take a break from that and try something a little different. Rest assured, Raven and the rest of the gang will be back for another installment in the next issue. The next two issues also see something of an experiment with our mini-adventures. Issue 13 will feature a *Fighting Fantasy* first, a Western adventure set in the 1800s in the American Old West, while issue 14 will have our first non-*Fighting Fantasy* mini-adventure in the form of a *Lone Wolf* tale from Simon Osborne!

This last thing, along with the Penlington interview, is another sign that we’re trying to broaden the content of the magazine to gamebooks in general, while still keeping a good eye on *Fighting Fantasy*. So I’d like to take this moment to remind readers to consider contributing to the magazine.

In the meantime I’d also like to welcome Andy Jones to our magazine staff as a copy editor, which means that hopefully spelling errors and the like will become far less frequent than in the past.

Alex
Alexander Ballingall, Editor

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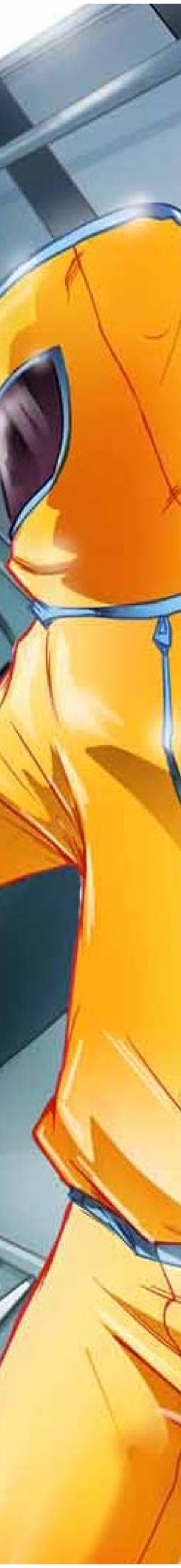

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Fighting Fantazine
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NEXT DEADLINE
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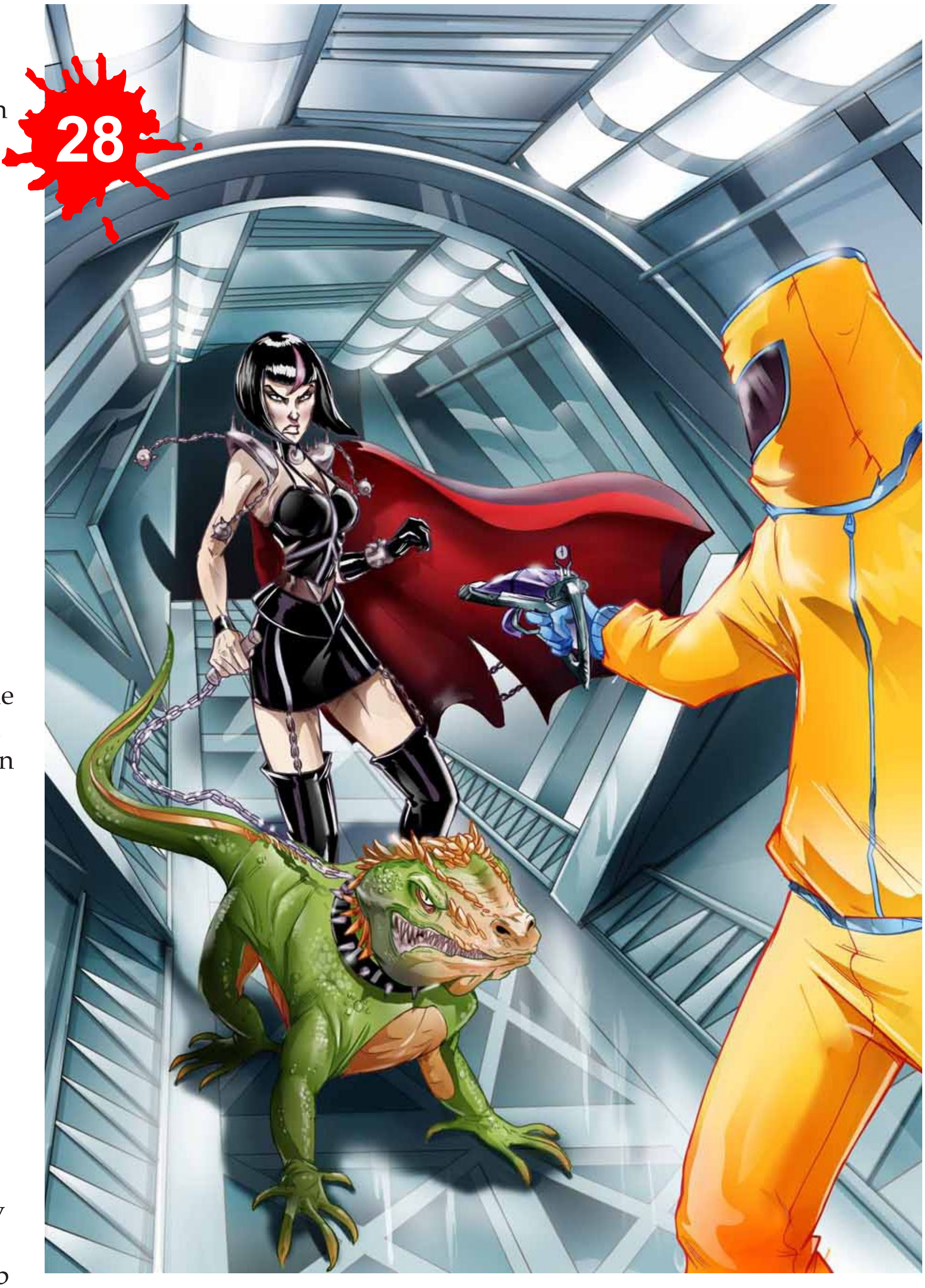


MINI ADVENTURE

28 Starhunt: Void Slavers: A Fighting Fantasy adventure

by **Ian Brocklehurst**

Illustrated by **Angela Salamaliki**

YOU are captain of the stellar freighter, *Starhunt*, and are renown throughout the Outlying Territories for delivering your cargo on time no matter the load or destination. Contacted by your distraught father, YOU learn that your sister has been kidnapped by Void Slavers. It is now a race against the clock to discover the location of the slave mart your sister will be sold at. Will YOU succeed or are you doomed to never know the fate of your sibling?

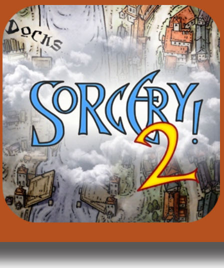
Turn to paragraph 1.

NEWS FROM EVERY CORNER OF TITAN AND BEYOND!

Omens & auguries

AT THE CORE OF THE GAMEBOOK COMMUNITY

> “*Curse of the Assassin* is a much bigger and bolder gamebook than its predecessor, so expect an epic story with a few twists and turns.”
>
> Neil Rennison, top man at Tin Man Games



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Return to the city of **Orlandes** for more **mayhem!**

September sees Tin Man Games returning to where they began in the gamebook field – their own fantasy world and the city of Orlandes. Doing a sequel seemed like a natural move according to Neil Rennison, the man in charge of the Tin Man team. "The first book is still one of our most popular titles and has a loyal fanbase," explains Neil of S.P. Osborne's adventure first published back in 2010, making it an obvious choice for a sequel. But why the delay? According to Neil, "After releasing *Judge Dredd: Countdown Sector 106* we were all set to continue with *Gamebook Adventures* and then Mr. Livingstone and Mr. Jackson came calling and obviously we couldn't say no. Sadly it meant that our *Gamebook Adventures* in production had to be put on hold while we warmed our feet in the *Fighting Fantasy* slippers. We've now released some *Fighting Fantasy* titles (and have many more in the works) and so it feels like we can finally get back to *Gamebook Adventures* once again."

The author of that original *Gamebook Adventure* title, Simon Osborne, indicated that he "was and continues to be very pleasantly surprised with its reception. I must confess to a general lack of self-confidence, so I initially tried to put Neil off when he first approached me, saying that I didn't think I'd be up to the task! Fortunately he persevered and I somewhat reluctantly agreed to try writing a fully-fledged gamebook. That reluctance on my part makes the mostly positive reception all the more amazing to me. That the positivity extends across all platforms indicates that I must have done something right!"

The time, then, was ripe to return to old haunts, Neil feeling it would be good to allow the player to "see the effects on a character once they had successfully saved a city!" This isn't just a trip back to Orlandes, with only scant reference to the original adventure. Neil points out that it is "a direct sequel set nearly two years after *An Assassin in Orlandes*. You play the same character and it starts in the familiar surroundings of Orlandes City." Fans can also look forward reaquainting themselves with some of the supporting cast of the previous title, Neil asserting that "there are certainly a few cameos from the first book!" Simon, meanwhile, let it be known that he has "developed Orlandes City with a view to making it a grubbier, less magical place. You might find yourself in the grimy brewers' quarter, or on a lonely road through the salt marsh beside the estuary. You will discover more about your character's history, about how and why you ended up where you did at the start of the first adventure. A couple of characters from the first adventure are back, though it will depend on what routes you took and will take as to whether you, the reader, will recognise them. There's even a guest appearance from everyone's favourite deranged, immortal cannibal."

Simon reminisces that "when I'd agreed to write *An Assassin in Orlandes*, I literally and metaphorically started with a blank sheet of paper. All I'd been told was that Orlandes was 'Spanish-themed', so I ran with that and tried to avoid the most obvious Generic Fantasy World™ tropes and monsters, which I think I did rather well. On top of that, I assumed I was aiming for an older audience than gamebooks were usually pitched at, so I wanted to imbue those characters with a little bit more personality than is usual in gamebooks, painting them not as wholly good or bad, but more fallible, more human than that. But the main authorial

Curse of the Assassin

APP for iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch, Android Google Play and Amazon Appstore
TIN MAN GAMES

WRITTEN BY S.P Osborne
ILLUSTRATED BY Pirkka Harvala
COVER ART BY Dan Maxwell
MUSIC BY Adrian Watkins
CODED BY Ben Britten Smith
EDITED BY Ariel Magnes and Neil Rennison
PRODUCED BY Neil Rennison

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 25 (Google Play, iOS & Amazon)
PRICE US$5.99*

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
It takes you back to the familiar surrounds of Orlandes City where you pick up your life some time after the events of *An Assassin in Orlandes*. You've risen in society after dealing with a certain assassin and saving the city, capturing the affections of the Duke's daughter along the way. The mysterious death of friend arouses your suspicions and once again you find yourself at the heart of conspiracy that takes you back to your home village and a meeting with your old adventuring party from your youth.

For more information, visit tinmangames.com.au

***Price is RRP**

decision I made was respecting the style.

"I have always admired Joe Dever's books for several reasons. I like the way he will drop information about history or geography into the middle of a paragraph, not as a clue to a hidden riddle, but simply to add verisimilitude to the world, developing its cultures and peoples. My aim with *An Assassin in Orlandes* was to come up with my own 'voice', my own style, melding the adventure and greater danger of *Fighting Fantasy* with the storytelling and world-building of *Lone Wolf*."

So, with a distinctive style of gameplay and a world to re-explore, what can readers expect the new adventure to be about? Neil reveals that "at the end of the first book you had saved Orlandes City from Eltane and the start of this book shows what has happened in the two years since. As is usual with gamebook adventures, you're never far away from a new adventure and very quickly you're thrown into a rollercoaster story that takes you through Orlandes City and beyond to your old stomping grounds, where you will recruit old friends and meet old adversaries from your youth – and you even end up out at sea!"

Simon notes that with his new adventure he "wanted to make sure that the story started at the beginning and was followed through right to the end. At the same time, I've tried to make every decision have a purpose and an outcome rather than just throwing in an arbitrary choice for the sake of it. I've long admired the *Fabled Lands* books because of the emphasis placed on world folklore. I decided that I'd follow suit and go further in emphasizing the Mediterranean-style history and cultures in the sequel than I had in the first one. I did a lot of research into European and South American folklore, much of which made its way into the adventure.

"Also, I hope I've created characters that the reader will like and care about. In fleshing out the reader's past, I've tried to give the sense of belonging to the world that 'You are a hardy adventurer...' simply doesn't. In reading the adventure, I hope the reader will be surprised to find out about their own past and hopefully will come to like the characters – the friends and travelling companions – that I've created. I was initially worried about how *An Assassin in Orlandes* would be received, since I'd deliberately eschewed the typical *Fighting Fantasy*-style in favour of an unfolding plot and a low-magic world. Would readers decide that they didn't want to read lots of text, that they preferred being faced with a door that they could enter or continue up the corridor? As it turned out, people actually rather liked *Assassin*, so with *Curse* I decided to follow the same formula, focusing on the narrative more than on endless fights with Orcs."

This is reflected in the game mechanics of the adventure, Neil pointing out that "we have a tried and tested formula and fans should expect more of the same. *Curse of the Assassin* is a much bigger and bolder gamebook than its predecessor, though, so expect an epic story with a few twists and turns. In this book too you get a chance to team up with an old adventuring buddy, which offers the chance for multiple playthroughs and different outcomes."

So, in summation, you can expect *Curse of the Assassin* to be more of the same given it is a sequel to *An Assassin in Orlandes*, yet at the same time you can expect a stronger grasp of the interactive gameplay that made the first title a hit on release. But is there one last thing that you could expect to see in this long-awaited new adventure? Simon won't spill the beans, except to add that readers can look forward to "puns – quite a few puns."

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

BUY IT BECAUSE: We finally get a return to Orlandes for a cracking new adventure!

inkle Studios is back with a new app in October, adapting Steve Jackson's second of the four *Sorcery!* tales, 1984's *Kharé – Cityport of Traps*. This puts them ahead of app maker Bright AI, who had planned to adapt all four books back in 2010 and only managed the first title. With the tricky first app out of the way, we wanted to know what the response had been from die-hard *Fighting Fantasy* fans right through to those iOS gamers who had no idea what *Fighting Fantasy* was until they played that first app.

According to Jon Ingold, the man in charge of inkle Studio's *Sorcery!* adaptations, "The response has been phenomenal across the board. We were pretty nervous when we launched the app – after all, selling a text-game in 2013 doesn't sound like a smart move! But we've been bowled over by the reaction. We've had 90%+ reviews from mainstream gaming sites like IGN and Kotaku, Gold Awards from *GamesMaster* magazine and Pocket Gamer, and our App Store ratings are overwhelmingly 5-star. On the industry side, we were invited to talk at GDC Europe about our experience making *Sorcery!* to a packed-out room of developers, both indie and from major studios.

"The fans we've heard from have also really enjoyed it – I think they've enjoyed returning to the Old World to find new surprises in store. In particular, we've been relieved by the response to the new combat system: the decision to remove dice was going to be pretty controversial, but I think most players have got why we did it and have enjoyed mastering the new system."

One might have been tempted to rest upon the deserved laurels being heaped on the app, but inkle Studios have look at *Sorcery! 2* as an opportunity to improve things even further. As Jon explains it, "The biggest change is the spell-casting. When we made the first part, we weren't quite sure how close we should stick to the original system: we didn't think we could ask people to memorise the spells up-front, but we didn't want to provide an easy way to check what a spell was from the casting screen, so there was at least some challenge. But we found that a lot of players new to the game had no idea what the spells did, and some even stopped using them, which is pretty bad for a game called *Sorcery!*

"So we've changed the design of spell-casting completely for Part 2: it's a lot more friendly to new players and the gameplay is more about choosing the right spell for the circumstances and less about remembering the spells."

Jon adds for those die-hard fans who want the original *Sorcery!* spell-casting experience, that those "who want it can still do the memory challenge; if they choose not to take the spellbook with them at the start of the game they'll have to rely on their knowledge!"

Spell-casting isn't the only area where

Kharé is a cityport full of traps!

players will notice some changes bewteen Part 1 and Part 2, Jon noting that “the other big issue was the length. Even though Part 1 was substantially longer than the original book, with almost four times as much text, some people still complained they got through it too fast! So we went into Book 2 determined to make it truly epic. Filling every corner of the city with content has been a lot of work, but we think it’s really paid off. There are a lot of things to discover...”

Length was one goal of the new app, but not the only goal. “We knew it had to be bigger, longer, better, harder and flashier. Kharé is a great location: the city is compact, full of winding alleys, loops, and backtracking. There are lots of places in the city where things will change over time – other characters move around, shops open and close, so the order in which you explore can change what you discover.

“The other big change is the addition of a female avatar; and we’re re-releasing Part 1 with that option enabled as well. It was something we always wanted to do, but our budget for the first episode was quite tight after all the new art we had commissioned. But we’re pleased that it sold well enough for us to go back and add in a second character.”

It hasn’t all been roses, with the second app throwing up a challenge for the inkle team. “The map,” Jon states boldly. “Anyone who’s tried making a map of Kharé will know it’s a very complex place and I’m not sure it even quite fits together... We spent a long time working out the shape of the city in the book and then we realised there was a larger problem. Kharé is a “golden path” book; one you’re meant to replay until you find the correct route through. But asking people to replay the whole game over and over to reach the ending isn’t going to work great on a mobile game, especially when the text is so expanded and the city is so much bigger! So we started to move the city around and redesign the layout.

“Which means people who know the book are going to be in for some big surprises. Prepare to get lost in the mean streets of Kharé all over again!”

In addition to this wealth of changes and embellishments, Jon feels that there is still further material to tempt those who’ve played *Sorcery!* many times since 1984. “The biggest addition is a new core mechanic; so we went back to prototyping and tried out quite a few ideas before we settled on one. It’s a gambling game and the most popular game amongst the citizens of Kharé. It’s a game all about lying, traps and deceit.

“The name is Deathtrap Dice – and yes, that means we are putting dice back into the game! We had a great afternoon with Steve working out the rules and strategies for the AI to use. But he’s very good at this kind of game, so despite the fact we’d been thinking about the game for several weeks, he picked it up and won the first round hands down...

“We’ve also been delving into the story and investigating the politics and history of Kharé. So if you ever wanted to know what the rulers might be like, or who founded it, or what a revolution might look like – or an invasion! – now you can find out.”

Finally, we asked Jon what he felt was the achievement with the new app he was most proud of. Jon replied, “That’s tricky!” Thinking about it further, he added, “I think for Joe, it’s probably the new spell-casting interface, which was a real bit of 3D engineering, and the resulting effect is truly spectacular.

“For me, it’s Deathtrap Dice – it’s a simple game with a lot of depth, but we’ve managed to find a way to take it to the next level and make it a vital part of the story. To find out exactly how, though, you’ll just have to play it when it comes out...”

Either way, *Sorcery! 2* looks to be a worthy re-vamp of a classic *Fighting Fantasy* adventure!

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

BUY IT BECAUSE: **inkle continues to bring the *Fighting Fantasy* world to life in clever and unusual ways!**

Docks
SORCERY! 2

Sorcery! 2

APP for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch

INKLE STUDIOS

WRITTEN BY Steve Jackson
DESIGNED & DEVELOPED BY inkle
ILLUSTRATED BY John Blanche
CHARACTER ART BY Eddie Sharam
MAP BY Mike Schley
MUSIC BY David Wise

RELEASED late OCTOBER*
PRICE US$4.99*

WHAT’S IT ABOUT?

The adventure continues in the city of Kharé, a place of traps, thieves and tricksters. With your sword and spellbook, can you make it through the city alive?

EXTRA FEATURES

- Start a new adventure as either a male or female hero, or continue your story from *Sorcery!*
- Navigate the streets, sewers and markets of Kharé via a series of beautiful hand-drawn maps
- Over 300,000 words of content, adapted and expanded from the original book. New traps, new twists!
- Thousands of choices and every one is remembered
- Brand new gambling mechanic – can you outwit the residents of Kharé at the game of Deathtrap Dice?
- Spell-casting has been overhauled into glorious 3D
- Over thirty new monsters to fight, using your sword or your fists!

For more information, visit www.inklestudios.com/sorcery

***Release date subject to change and price is RRP**

Fighting Fantasy Framework

■ *Fighting Fantasy* Framework is a project created by Pawel Dziemski that allows people to make *Fighting Fantasy*-type gamebooks online: *"With FFFramework you can create your own interactive adventure or gamebook with minimum HTML knowledge and publish it on the web."* There are currently four adventures available. You can find the *Fighting Fantasy* Framework at: sourceforge.net/p/fightingfantasy/wiki/Home/

Your adventure begins here

■ A.P. Martin (@gamebooks1) has released his second gamebook in the *Adventure Begins Here* series. It is called *Dragon's Deep*:

Ashley P Martin
ADVENTURE BEGINS HERE
GAMEBOOK 2
Dragon's Deep

> *Yet again the kingdom is in danger. A huge red dragon is on the loose, terrorising all who stand in its way. Its impenetrable hide, vicious claws and fiery breath make it a fearsome opponent.*
>
> *To make matters worse, the only weapon needed to fight the creature, the Dragon Spear, has been stolen by a mysterious group of dokkalfar thieves. Now you must recover the spear from these dark elves, make your way into Dragon's Deep and slay the dragon.*
>
> *You will need two dice, a pencil and an eraser to play this adventure gamebook. Can you survive the deadly traps and fearsome monsters that guard DRAGON'S DEEP?*

You can buy *Dragon's Deep* for US$12.34 for a paperback and US$4.15 for the Kindle edition.

FIGHTING FANTASY

While there is still nothing stirring *Fighting Fantasy*-wise in the Wizard Books camp, others still keep the midnight fires burning.

TIN MAN GAMES

After the success of *The Forest of Doom*, Tin Man Games will be releasing more *Fighting Fantasy* apps. Their next release will be *Island of the Lizard King* which will follow the samne route as their three previous *Fighting Fantasy* adaptations. The following title, planned for early 2014, *Appointment with F.E.A.R.*, will not just be a case of transferring the text to an electronic medium, however. The app will not use dice; instead it will use a more skill-based mechanic. You will also be able to customise your character more by being able to choose your gender, your superpower, your costume design and your superhero name. Tin Man Games will also make much more of HERO points and will have a leaderboard connected to the Game Centre so that players can compare their scores. Following this will be another Steve Jackson title, *Starship Traveller*, planned for release some time in 2014. Word has it that *Starship Traveller* will feature entirely new art from a different artist.

INKLE STUDIOS

The second *Sorcery!* app from inkle Studios is due out in late October. We can expect the third app in the series sometime before the middle of next year.

ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY

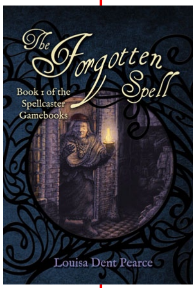
Arion Games has released an updated version of *The Sorcery Spell Book*. This edition contains all the original descriptions and illustrations from the *Sorcery!* series by Steve Jackson. It also has the spell descriptions for the spells written for the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* 2nd edition, the sorcery rules for *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* and ideas for house rules related to sorcery, such as apprentice sorcery, descriptions of sorcery in other kingdoms and the arch sorcery rule. You can buy *The Sorcery Spell Book* for £9.00 from the Arion Games store. Meanwhile, the next release is the follow-up to *Out of the Pit*, Andrew Wright's *Beyond the Pit*. No word yet on a release date.

YOU ARE THE HERO

The first draft of *You are the Hero* is complete. Jonathan Green has posted some tidbits of information on the *You are the Hero* blog and the updates section of the Kickstarter page.A sketch of a Bloodbeast by Iain McCaig can be seen on Green's blog. The book still has an expected release date of December 2013.

TIN MAN GAMES

Tin Man Games has announced/confirmed the titles of its next four *Gamebook Adventures* apps to be released after *Curse of the Assassin*: the previously announced *Sultans of Rema* by Gaetano Abondanza kicks things off with an expected release date of January next year. It is followed by *Lords of Nurroth* by Dylan Birtollo (due March/April 2014), *Awakening of Asuria* by Stuart Lloyd (projected daet of summer 2014), and *Voices of the Mystics* by Kieran Coghlan (projected date of late summer 2014). Synopses for the releases can be found on the Tin Man Games website.



Meanwhile, *The Forgotten Spell* by Louisa Dent Pearce will be released as an app (by Tin Man) and as a physical book shortly. The digital edition will have new illustrations from Tony Hough. *The Forgotten Spell* is the first gamebook in the *Spellcaster Trilogy*. Work on the second and third books in the trilogy, *The Gatekeeper's Oath* and *The King of Suidemor*, is underway. You can see upcoming illustrations for *The Forgotten Spell* at Tony Hough's Facebook group.

No word yet on whether there will be a possible third title in the *Strange Loves* series, or on a possible release date for the expected *Gun Dogs* from Gary Chalk.

ALL RELEASE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AND ALL PRICES ARE RRP.

THE ORACLE OF THE STARSTONE CAVES

Your handy guide to the gamebook-related apps, books, magazines, and RPGs available soon...

OCTOBER

MONDAY 7

BOOK – A Branching Plot Novel

■ **Death by Zombies: Road to Somewhere** by C.G. Chase AMAZON DIGITAL US$0.99

TUESDAY 8

BOOK – It's Your Call: Phineas and Ferb

■ **Secret Agent Showdown** by Carla Jablonski DISNEY PRESS US$4.99

THURSDAY 10

BOOK – You Choose if You Live or Die

■ **Jungle Crash** by Simon Chapman FRANKLIN WATTS £5.99

BOOK – You Choose if You Live or Die

■ **Prison Escape** by Simon Chapman FRANKLIN WATTS £5.99

WEDNESDAY 30

EVENT – Windhammer Competition

■ Entries close

BOOK – Choose Your Own Path

■ **Quest for the Lost Treasure** by Gerry Gaston PROJECT A PUBLISHING US$19.95

It's YOUR Call
with more than 10 possible endings
Disney
Phineas and Ferb
SECRET AGENT SHOWDOWN
From the hit Disney TV series

date TBA

BOOK – Shinte Warrior

■ **Trials of the First Moon** by Michael Perrin PERRIN PUBLISHING US$30.00

date TBA

APP – iOS

■ **Fighting Fantasy – Sorcery! 2** by Steve Jackson INKLE STUDIOS US$4.99 See page 8

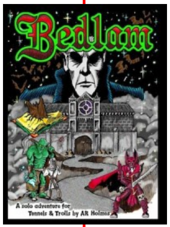
TUNNELS & TROLLS

As part of its release of Deluxe *Tunnels & Trolls*, Flying Buffalo has released an expanded version of the classic *Tunnels & Trolls* solo, *City of Terrors*.

Originally written by Michael Stackpole, this solo has been updated to be compatible with the Deluxe edition of the rules, has been expanded upon by Ken St. Andre and has new artwork. The original had a very sandbox-like structure, where you could explore the city. You can buy it in PDF form for $4.93 from RPGNow.

Bedlam is a new *Tunnels & Trolls* solo with over 200 paragraphs by Andy R. Holmes and illustrated by Jeff Freels:

"Many speak in hushed tones of the dark asylum brooding atop Goblin Moors and of the unspeakable horrors that dwell within. Its sinister Master comes to town for supplies only at night, before his accursed carriage speeds away to the nightmarish building that is Bedlam. People vanish on the moors and their corpses are found months later - drained of blood! Recently, new scandal surrounds the asylum: the son of a nobleman has disappeared on a hunting trip on the moors. His father has offered a reward for his rescue, but it is believed that the Master has imprisoned him in the asylum for some foul purpose. Will you, brave soul, being of sound mind, pass through the portal of madness into Bedlam?"


Bedlam
A solo adventure for Tunnels & Trolls by AR Holmes

Bedlam is open to any character up to level 3 with no more than 35 combat adds. Spell-casting does not work in the strange asylum, but magic-users are free to try their luck regardless. This classic solo adventure is compatible with all versions of *Tunnels & Trolls* and you can buy *Bedlam* for $2.99 from RPGNow. All proceeds from sales of Bedlam will go to the Jeff Freels kidney transplant fund.

Deathbed is a *Tunnels & Trolls* solo by Mark Thornton and illustrated by Kanani Cowell, Mark Thornton, Charlie O'Brien and Kamea Cowell. You can buy *Deathbed* in PDF form for $1.98 from RPGNow.

Fleabitten – Neither Here Nor There is an underwater *Tunnels & Trolls* solo by Mark Thornton with illustrations from Mark Thornton and Kamea Cowell. You can buy *Fleabitten – Neither Here Nor There* for $2.97 in PDF from from RPGNow.

FABLED LANDS

The *Golden Dragon* gamebooks are being reprinted. Four books from the *Golden Dragon* series – *Curse of the Pharaoh*, *Castle of Lost Souls*, *The Temple of Flame*, and *The Lord of Shadow Keep* – have already been reprinted and are currently available on Amazon.

Dave Morris has also written that he intends to reprint all the gamebooks written in the 1980s and 1990s written by himself, Jamie Thomson, Mark Smith and Oliver Johnson.

Starting this September, the team at Fabled Lands Publishing began releasing the *Critical IF* line, starting with the *Virtual Reality* books by Dave Morris (*Heart of Ice*, *Down Among the Dead Men*, *Necklace of Skulls* and *Once Upon a Time in Arabia*, previously known as *Twist of Fate*). These will be followed by gamebooks in the *Bloodsword*, *Falcon* and *Duelmaster* series.

There will also be some new books released. As Dave writes, he will be releasing an "old-time gamebook series that we can't talk about yet, but that will also include a new prequel and maybe a new sequel that I have been specifically asked to note is not licensed to Fabled Lands LLP…" These books and Dave Morris's four *Virtual Reality* gamebooks will be released over the next six months.

HEART OF ICE
DAVE MORRIS
DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN
DAVE MORRIS
NECKLACE OF SKULLS
DAVE MORRIS
ONCE UPON A TIME IN ARABIA
DAVE MORRIS

Maelorum

■ *Maelorum* has been released as a PDF on RPGNow. You are able to buy the electronic copy of this book for US$9.99.

Tweet RPG

■ Tweet RPG, the roleplaying system, which combines social media and 'create-your-own-adventure' gaming, recently celebrated its second birthday! Over its two-year existence, Tweet RPG has provided followers on Twitter with eight original and unique narrative experiences, including a collaboration with British RPG publisher Modiphius, to create an *Achtung! Cthulhu* adventure. After a busy start to 2013, you can expect a new adventure at the start of October! For more info, visit tweetrpg.co.uk and follow @tw33t_rpg on Twitter!

Chronicles of Arborell

■ Arborell.com is pleased to announce the release of *The Dark Water Omnibus*, a compilation edition of ten micro-gamebook adventures from the Chronicles of Arborell. This PDF edition includes four new adventures plus six micro-gamebooks previously available from the Chronicles as individual downloads.

These two-page solitaire adventures present stories and events taken from the long history of Arborell, each a fantasy adventure requiring only a pen, two six-sided dice and a printed copy of the adventure to play. All are free to download and designed to be used with a minimum of gaming materials. To download these titles visit: www.arborell.com/download.html

NOVEMBER

THURSDAY 7
EVENT – Windhammer Competition
■ Winners announced

date TBA
RPG – Advanced Fighting Fantasy
■ **Beyond the Pit** by Andrew Wright ARION GAMES US$24.99

date TBA
BOOK – Trial of a Clone
■ **Wrath of the Pacifist** by Zachary Weiner BREADPIG US$15.00

date TBA
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Trial of a Clone: Wrath of the Pacifist** by Zachary Weiner TIN MAN GAMES US$4.99

date TBA
RPG – Advanced Fighting Fantasy
■ **Pirates à la Dérive** by Olivier Monseur SCRIPTARIUM €20
RPG – Maelstrom
■ **Maelstrom Domesday** by Graham Bottley ARION GAMES price TBA

DECEMBER

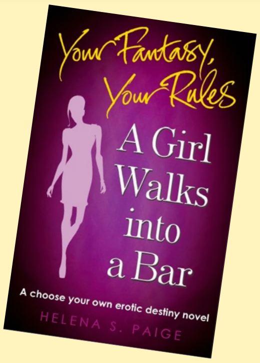
THURSDAY 19
BOOK – Choose Your Own Erotic Destiny*
■ **A Girl Walks into a Bar** by Helena S. Paige SPHERE £6.99
BOOK – Choose Your Own Erotic Destiny*
■ **A Girl Walks into a Wedding** by Helena S. Paige SPHERE £6.99

THURSDAY 26
BOOK – Which Way, Dude?
■ **Jake Goes Bananas** by Max Brallier PRICE STERN SLOAN US$4.99

date TBA
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Fighting Fantasy – Island of the Lizard King** by Ian Livingstone TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99

JANUARY 2014

date TBA
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Fighting Fantasy – Appointment with F.E.A.R.** by Steve Jackson TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99


Your Fantasy, Your Rules
A Girl Walks into a Bar
A choose your own erotic destiny novel
HELENA S. PAIGE

OTHER GAMEBOOK DEVELOPMENTS

Other gamebooks in the works include the following titles, many of which have been funded thanks to Kickstarter campaigns:

■ Brought to you by Black Chicken Studios and Tin Man Games, *Holdfast* is a gamebook where you play a dwarf who seeks to reclaim his land from all kinds of horrible monsters. It is planned to be released in print (hardback and softback) and for Android, Mac and PC. The book will have over 600 paragraphs and 50 illustrations. The Kickstarter obtained over $30,000, which was over their target of $20,000. The book is expected to be released by December 2013 and the app will be released by April 2014. Here is the summary of *Holdfast*:

"Down in the deeps of the Stormwall mountains lay vast kingdoms of worked stone, jewelled lanterns and polished axes. Gon Durul, Halsond and the Westerdeep...their proud halls are no more: their great treasures laid bare, their warriors slain at the gates and their crowns hidden away in Seven Helms.

Clanless though you may be, the fires of anger against those that have stolen from, shamed and injured your people burn as hot in you as in any dwarf. Now, the tale can be told of how a chance discovery in a forgotten tomb will lead you to a ruined fortress and how, through courage, battle and cunning, you will carve out a Holdfast for your people in the Deeps!"

For more information, you can visit *Holdfast*'s Kickstarter page: www.kickstarter.com/projects/blackchickenstudios/holdfast-a-gamebook-of-dwarven-vengeance

■ *Past Away* is an interactive sci-fi/horror motion comic from Christopher Middleton at Scindo Media Inc., which raised $17,000 on May 25th, exceeding its $15,000 goal. In the comic a pizza delivery man runs into some old friends on Halloween, but then comes across many other tribulations. The comic will be released in October 2013 online. You can read more about it at its Kickstarter page: www.kickstarter.com/projects/872423106/past-away-choose-how-youll-survive

■ Michael Perrin has successfully funded the first book in his *Shinte Warrior* martial-arts role-playing gamebook series. The first book, *Trials of the First Moon* obtained $4,205 of pledges, smashing his target of $2,000. The book will be out in October and a sequel is planned called *The Quest for Rividia*. The Kickstarter for the sequel will appear soon. You can read more about the *Shinte Warrior* gamebook series and see many of its pages on its Kickstarter page: www.kickstarter.com/projects/817968704/book-1-shinte-warrior-series-trials-of-the-first-m

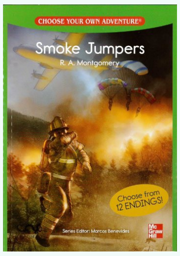
Trials of the First Moon
Michael G. Perrin, Ph.D.

■ *Wrath of the Pacifist* is the sequel to the hugely successful *Trial of the Clone* by Zach Weinersmith, creator of *Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal*. The Kickstarter raised $47,746, way over its $20,000 target, and it is expected to be released in November 2013 as both a physical book and an app.

The story takes place at the end of your rule as a benevolent sovereign, when the universe is once again thrown into turmoil. It's up to you to save it, but you'll have to navigate your way to supreme power in order to succeed.

TRIAL OF THE CLONE 2
WRATH OF THE PACIFIST
BY ZACH WEINERSMITH

Choose Your Own Adventure



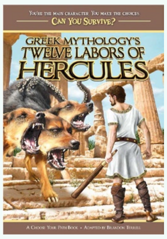
■ *Choose Your Own Adventure* has released a series of "Graded Reader Editions" of various titles. Published at the start of September were: *Return to Dorado*, *Chinese Dragons*, *The Secret of Stonehenge*, *House of Danger*, *Escape from Dorado*, *Project UFO*, *The Jewels of Nabooti*, *Lost on the Amazon*, *Murder in the Family*, *Track Star*, *Silver Wings*, *Exiled to Earth*, *Smoke Jumpers*, *Journey to Atlantis*, *Tattoo of Death* (all by R.A. Montgomery), *Lost City of the Outback* and *The Case of the Silk King* (Shannon Gilligan), *Secret of the Ninja* (Jay Leibold), *The Gorillas of Uganda* and *Terror on the Titanic* (Jim Wallace), *Task Force: U.N.* (Ramsey Montgomery), *Moon Quest* (Anson Montgomery), and *The Treasure on the Onyx Dragon* (Allison Gilligan).

Review of *House of Danger* page 98

Choose Your Path

■ *H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines* of the *A Choose Your Path Book* series has been pushed back for release on February 15th, 2014. Meanwhile, *Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island* by Blake Hoena and *Greek Mythology's Twelve Labors of Hercules* by Brandon Terrell, both from the same series, were released on the 9th of September.

YOU'RE THE MAIN CHARACTER. YOU MAKE THE CHOICES.
CAN YOU SURVIVE?
Robert Louis Stevenson's
TREASURE ISLAND
A Choose Your Path Book • Adapted by Blake Hoena


YOU'RE THE MAIN CHARACTER. YOU MAKE THE CHOICES.
CAN YOU SURVIVE?
GREEK MYTHOLOGY'S
TWELVE LABORS OF
HERCULES
A Choose Your Path Book • Adapted by Brandon Terrell

APP – iOS, Android
■ **Gamebook Adventures 10 – Sultans of Rema** by Gaetano Abbondanza TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99

date TBA
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **Hurricane Katarina** by Blake Hoena CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Race to the Moon** by Allison Lassieur CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Sinking of the Lusitania** by Steven Otfinoski CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Vietnam War** by Michael Burgan CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **War in Afghanistan** by Matt Doeden CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – You Choose Stories: Scooby Doo
■ **The Case of the Cheese Thief** by J.E. Bright YOU CHOOSE STORIES US$6.95
BOOK – You Choose Stories: Scooby Doo
■ **The Mystery of the Maze Monster** by John Sazaklis YOU CHOOSE STORIES US$6.95
BOOK – You Choose Stories: Scooby Doo
■ **The Secret of the Sea Creature** by Laurie S. Sutton YOU CHOOSE STORIES US$6.95
BOOK – You Choose Stories: Scooby Doo
■ **The Terror of the Bigfoot Beast** by Laurie S. Sutton YOU CHOOSE STORIES US$6.95

*Series known as *Your Fantasy, Your Rules* in the US (published by WILLIAM MORROW)

You can find out more about *Wrath of the Pacifist* on its Kickstarter page: www.kickstarter.com/projects/weiner/trial-of-the-clone-2-wrath-of-the-pacifist

■ Graham Bottley from Arion Games has raised £6,556 on Kickstarter for a new expansion to the *Maelstrom* RPG. The new expansion, called *Maelstrom Domesday*, will be set in the 11th century and will involve investigating the supernatural. The rules will be out in October 2013. You can read more about *Maelstrom Domesday* on its Kickstarter page: www.kickstarter.com/projects/2036759092/maelstrom-domesday-rpg

■ *The Way of the Tiger* gamebooks are being re-released as new collector's editions by Megara Entertainment LLC! The legendary gamebook series comes back to life in a full-colour hardcover edition available in a Kickstarter campaign that started on September 27th. The six books of *The Way of the Tiger* are being revised and printed in a deluxe collectible edition, with full-colour new art inspired by the original, increased page dimensions and with every book signed by the authors. The series will also be expanded with a prequel called *Ninja!* written by David Walters under the guidance of Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson. If the stretch goals for the Kickstarter campaign are reached, the original authors will even write book 7 in the series and resolve the massive cliff-hanger at the end of book 6 that has teased fans for decades. This is a limited run, funded solely by Kickstarter, so be sure to check it out when it launches in October. Meanwhile you can follow the Facebook group for more details: www.facebook.com/groups/370105323051113/

Meanwhile, *The Way of the Tiger* RPG (Beta version) was updated in May. The RPG is now scheduled to be released mid-2014 to allow it to come after the re-release of all *The Way of the Tiger* gamebooks, the prequel book and possibly book 7.

RECENT GAMEBOOK ROUNDUP

Some of the gamebook titles published in the last few months (and managed to avoid our detection) include:

SEPTEMBER

■ A Kindle-only release for US$3.99, *The Dream Thief* by A.J. Cosmo puts the reader in charge of a child who follows Onry the Dream Thief on a night of dream-making or stealing.

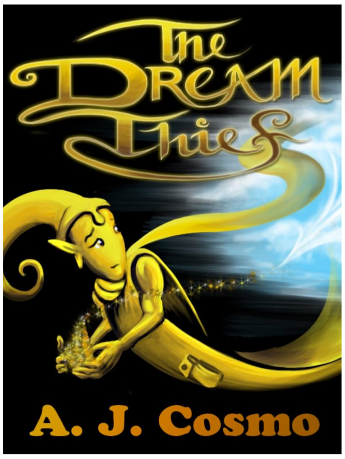
■ *Crossroads: A Quirky Choose Your Own Adventure Story* by H.S. Contino is now available for £6.44:

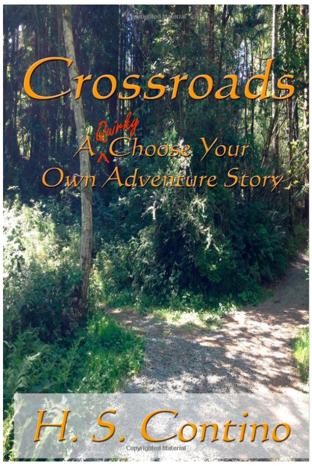
> *Once upon a time, an ordinary woman found herself trapped in a boring life. Then, one day she discovered a self-help book. Plain Jane was skeptical at first. The author claimed that "changing your life is as simple as changing your attitude."*
>
> *Please, join our heroine as she chronicles a single week of her life. The story is a "choose your own adventure." Throughout the book, Plain Jane will find herself at a series of crossroads. It's up to you, the reader, to choose where she'll go next or what course of action she'll take. The excitement or "boringness" of the story is entirely up to you!*

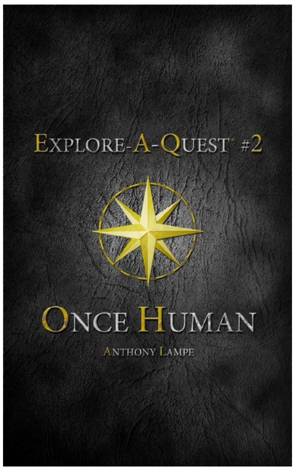
■ Another Kindle-only tale, *Choose Your Own Freakshow: Escape from the Mad Slasher of Crookfield* by Michael Byan is US$2.99.

■ Three *Explore-a-Quest* books, *Channel U* and *Once Human* (both by Anthony Lampe) and *Missing Money of Altevia* (by Timothy Lampe) are all available on the Kindle, all priced at US$2.99 each.

■ Shakespeare gets in on the gamebook act with *To Be or Not to Be* by Ryan North. At US$28.95, this was a 2012 Kickstarter-funded project that, with a goal of $20,000, managed to raise $580, 905. The reader can be Hamlet, Ophelia or King Hamlet – if you want to die on the first page and play as a ghost.







To Be
OR
Not To Be
A chooseable-path adventure by Ryan North, William Shakespeare, and YOU.

Vupop 2 – Interactive Fiction Conference

■ Demian Katz (one of our editors) is hosting a conference on interactive fiction in the summer of 2014 at Villanova University. The subject will be the evolution of interactive fiction and how to use it pedagogically. Demian is currently looking for proposals in the form of 30-minute presentations. The deadline is May 1st, 2014. For more information on submitting a proposal and Vupop 2, visit vupop.org.

Choose Your Own Adventure - the movie!

■ 20th Century Fox is reportedly nearing a deal to acquire the rights to *Choose Your Own Adventure*, the iconic 1980s book line, with John Davis and John Fox of Davis Entertainment attached to produce what the studio hopes will be a cross-platform, four-quadrant, action-adventure franchise.

Lone Wolf

■ Joe Dever has made a deal with Vincent Books to publish a hard-cover Italian-language collector's edition of the *Lone Wolf* gamebooks. The extended version of *Flight From the Dark* will be published in October 2013 and released at the Lucca comics and games show. Future editions will be published every 3-4 months after that.

Nic Bonczyk, CEO of Mantikore-Verlag, and Joe Dever have released the English-language collector's edition of the 18th *Lone Wolf* book, *Dawn of the Dragons*. As well as the original adventure, *Lone Wolf* #18 also includes a 250-paragraph bonus adventure, *The Dead of Chrude*, written by Nic and Joe. You can buy *Dawn of the Dragons* and other *Lone Wolf* books from Mantikore-Verlag. It costs €19.95.

Librogame result

■ The sixth year for the open competition for short interactive stories, organized by the most important Italian gamebook community (www.librogame.net), has closed with the winner being announced as *Trappola nelle Tenebre* (i.e. *Trap in the Darkness*) by Mauro Longo.

This year recorded the highest number of voters and participants and it was widely agreed that the average entry quality was very high. This year the theme was Magnamund, the world of *Lone Wolf*, and the hero of the winning adventure comes from a magnificent rat civilization that is encountered in the *Fire on the Water* gamebook.

The prize will be handed over at Lucca Comix 2013 (31st October-3rd November), the most important gaming convention in Italy, and it will include a hard-copy publication. In the meantime, Mauro Longo published a free PDF version of *Trappola nelle Tenebre* with added images on his popular blog: maurolongo.wordpress.com. Now the debate has begun as to the theme of the next competition!

Spanish zombies!

IAN LIVINGSTONE
LA SANGRE DE LOS ZOMBIS
¡UN LIBROJUEGO EN EL QUE TÚ ERES EL HÉROE!

■ *Blood of the Zombies* was published in Spanish as *Le Sangre de la Zombis* by www.darkgame.org. You can read about it at their site and buy the book for €13.25.

Tin Man speaks in tongues!

■ Tin Man Games will be releasing a French original gamebook about the war in Vietnam entitled *La Drang 65*. Meanwhile, the Lovecraftian-inspired *Les Fils d'Uruzimé* has already been released for Android and iOS (available for £1.99). This gamebook is the first part of a trilogy and so more releases will be forthcoming. A French version of *The Forest of Doom* (*La Forêt de la Malédiction*) is now available as well and a French version of *Infinite Universe* and a Spanish version of *An Assassin in Orlandes* are also currently in the works.

AUGUST

■ *Your Naughty Playmate: Soapy Teen Car Wash Fantasy* by Amanda Clover is a Kindle-only title for US$2.99:

> *Your marriage isn't what it used to be. You and your wife haven't had sex in months. Work isn't much better. You leave the office late on a Friday and find yourself next to a very popular car wash. A gorgeous bunch of local college coeds are volunteering their time – and their sexy bodies – to entice donations for charity. A particularly gorgeous blonde catches your eye and it's hard to resist the urge to get in line and make a very generous contribution to their fundraiser.*
>
> *You are in charge of this erotic fantasy. Your playmate is Mandy, a busty nineteen-year-old in a bikini willing to do just about anything to satisfy her customers in this interactive erotica with 16 steamy finishes!*

■ *Sam and Liza Go to the Beach* by Debbie Madson is another Kindle-only title for purchase at US$2.99. This book is designed for younger readers.

■ Three *Choose Your Own Burn Adventure* titles were released, all by James A. Sutherland and all for US$4.29 each. The individual books are *Night of the Strange Lights*, *Only Eleven More Hours to Go*, and *The Great Black Rock City Burning Man Bust*.

■ *Quest for a Cure* by Nick Gauthier is another Kindle only title available for US$2.99.

■ For the younger reader, three *Choose Your Own Adventure* (Dragonlark Book editions) titles have been published: *Sand Castle* and *Return to Haunted House*, both by R.A. Montgomery, and *Ghost Island* by Shannon Gilligan. The books are US$7.99 each.

■ A new *You Choose* title published was *Clothes Call* by J.J. Jackson for US$8.99 (US$1.99 on the Kindle):

> *Melanie, a 24-year-old lowly fashion stylist's assistant, isn't too keen to leave New York City for a few weeks at the Montana ranch home of E-Beth, an up-and-coming pop star, but she hopes the assignment will take her career to the next level and finally show her boss that she's just as good, if not better, than her brown-nosing colleague. Unfortunately, the star's agent has plans of his own that threaten to derail E-Beth's career and Melanie must decide where her loyalties lie and what she's willing to risk to climb the corporate ladder.*

■ A third title in Jo Cadwallader's *Choose Your Own Bondage* series was published. All three volumes, *First Day of School*, *On the Beach*, and the latest, *Escape from Enderby Kennel*, are available for purchase as PDFs from Lulu.com for around £2.00 each.

JULY

■ A further Kindle-only title is *High School Zombie Apocalypse Survival* by mobipoki, again available for US$2.99. The hero is stuck in high school when the zombie apocalypse occurs.

■ *Like Oceans of Liquid Skin* by E.S. Wynn is on the Kindle only, for US$5.95. Set on the planet Orcus Delta, the hero is called in to a dig where alien weaponry is involved.

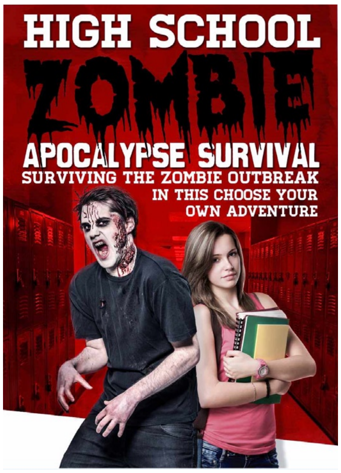
■ *Star Platoon* by Jody Studdard can be purchased for US$5.99 (US$3.99 on the Kindle). You are the leader of an elite group of space marines going up against an alien enemy.

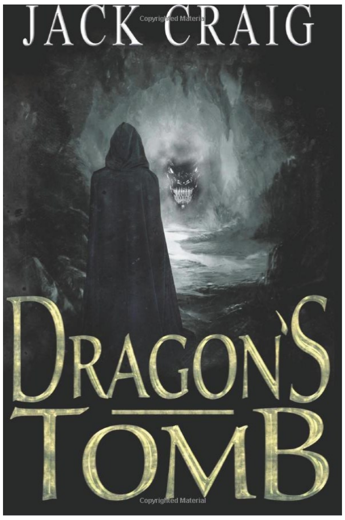
■ *Dragon's Tomb* by Jack Craig can be purchased for US$6.00. The player hunts a necromancer hiding in an ancient dragon's tomb.

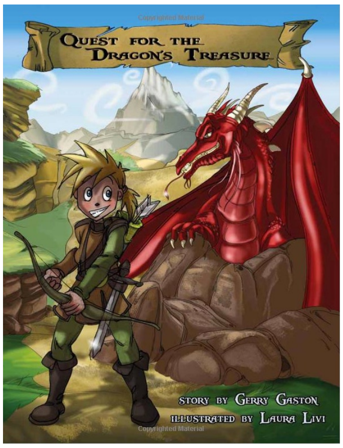
■ *Lost City of the Dwarves Part 2: Deliverance* by Christopher Young is available from RPGNow.com for US$15.00:

> *You have found the lost nation of Dwarves deep within their ruined city and defeated many of their enemies in the process. And while you stumbled into their realm as a novice adventurer with only the clothes on your back, you are now a 5th-level Hero who has accumulated a small arsenal of enchanted weapons and items. It's hard to believe that your adventure is only half over. The crucial finale of this historic event hangs in the balance and you are the one to tip the scales in the Dwarves' favour. In order*

YOUR NAUGHTY PLAYMATE 1
SOAPY TEEN CAR WASH FANTASY
AMANDA CLOVER







to emerge victorious you must delve deeper into the Lost City of the Dwarves, where you will find your greatest challenges yet and even greater treasures. You may even accomplish the feat of becoming a living legend.

JUNE

Chelsey's Magical Birthday

- *Chelsey's Magical Birthday* by Cassandra Fenyk is a Kindle-only title for US$3.99. It is about Chelsey and her quest to rescue a princess:

You wake up with Chelsey on her birthday. She is excited about her party – a magician is coming to teach Chelsey and her friends a few tricks.

A face in the mirror asking for help changes everything. Chelsey embarks on an adventure to rescue a princess and save magic in another land. But how Chelsey reaches her destination is entirely up to you.

Do you choose a magic wand or an enchanted amulet? Will you talk to a mermaid or learn how to tell riddles from a gnome? When you finally defeat the evil witch will you capture the power of a rainbow or trick the evil witch into casting a spell on herself?

Regardless of how Chelsey proceeds on her journey, she learns that believing in herself is the only magic she really needs.

- Another title for younger readers, *Quest for the Dragon's Treasure* by Gerry Gaston, can be purchased for US$8.55 (US$2.99 Kindle). It is the story of crown stolen by a red dragon and a hero setting out to find it.

- The first *Choose Your Own Erotic Odyssey* title has been published. *Escape the Monster Breeding Grounds* is by Amanda Clover as a Kindle-only release available for US$2.99. Promised as a bride to another, Princess Sabrina is lost in a dark forest full of monsters.

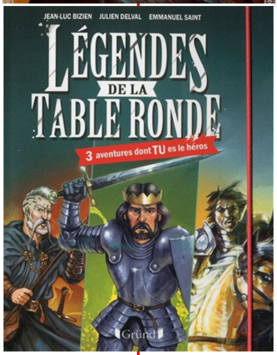
- *Private Conversations*, a *Choose Your Own Erotic Adventure* by N.C. East, is another Kindle-only title for purchase at US$2.99.

FOREIGN GAMEBOOK UPDATE

Time for a roundup of other foreign gamebooks that have come to our attention at *Fighting Fantazine*.

JAVIER NEGRETE
LA ESPADA DE FUEGO
minotauro

JAVIER NEGRETE
EL CORAZÓN DE TRAMÓREA
minotauro


JEAN-LUC BIZIEN JULIEN DELVAL EMMANUEL SAINT
LÉGENDES DE LA TABLE RONDE
3 aventures dont TU es le héros
Gründ

- The first is a set of four Spanish linked gamebooks by Javier Negrete published under the series title *Saga de Tramórea*. The four individual books are *La Espada de Fuego*, *El Espíritu del Mago*, *El Sueño de los Dioses*, and *El Corazón de Tramórea*. The series is available from www.planetadelibros.com for €9.95 each and are also available on the Kindle. The first book in the series is described thus:

Zemal, the Sword of Fire, is the ultimate symbol of power and the highest aspiration of every warrior. Only Tahedoranes, the great masters of the sword, can compete for it. After the death of the last Zemalnit, seven candidates are vying for the sword, but there are at stake more than merely the lust for power, as strange forces are willing to break the harmony between man and the gods and join to awaken Tubilok, the rebel god sleeping on a rock cast into the abyss of Prates and whose dreams become the nightmares of men. Derguín and Kratos May, warriors, and Linar and Mikhon Tiq, magicians, must face the chaos and destruction in order to overcome the multiple betrayals and Barok Togul traps, Ainar Prince, and to win the Sword of Fire and safeguard the fragile balance of Tramorea.

- *Perdido en la Carretera Sin Fin* by Waterboy of the Lord is a Spanish gamebook that tells the story of how you start off on a bike trip, but end up in a strange place with all kinds of strange creatures. You can play this gamebook for free online at sinfin.nfshost.com.

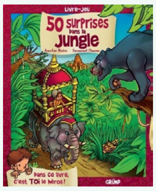
- *Légendes de la table ronde* by Jean Luc Bizien, Julien Delval and Emmanuel Saint is a French gamebook available as a paperback for €9.95:

The key of the adventure is in your hands! At the heart of the Dark Forest, waiting for you, are three epic and magical legends. Three stories in which you must make the right choices to avoid the pitfalls that lay before you. Page after page you'll have to solve puzzles, win battles and choose your path without mistakes to emerge victorious from the adventure. The challenges do not scare you – open the book and join Merlin the Magician in his search for the magical sword Excalibur. King Arthur helps to gather around him the knights of the Round Table and goes with Lancelot, the invincible paladin, in search of his destiny.

- *Flucht aus Doregal* by Damian Murcielago is a German, Kindle-only adventure and a sequel to another title, *Verrat in Doregal*, which he published in February. This new adventure is available for €2.68.

50 surprises

50 surprises chez les Pirates



- *50 surprises ches les pirates* by Jean Luc Bizien and Emmanuel Chaunu is a French gamebook now available, following its release in June.

Here you are transported to the time of pirates! In this book, in which you are the hero, only your decisions will allow you to complete your adventure and emerge victorious. You will find in this package a saber, a flag, a treasure map and a hat, all to decorate and personalize with your stickers!

You can buy *50 surprises ches les pirates* and *50 surprises dans la jungle* (also by Jean Luc Bizien), another June release from the same series, as softbacks for €6.60 each.

ゲームブック

Some Japanese gamebooks have also become available to obtain relatively recently:

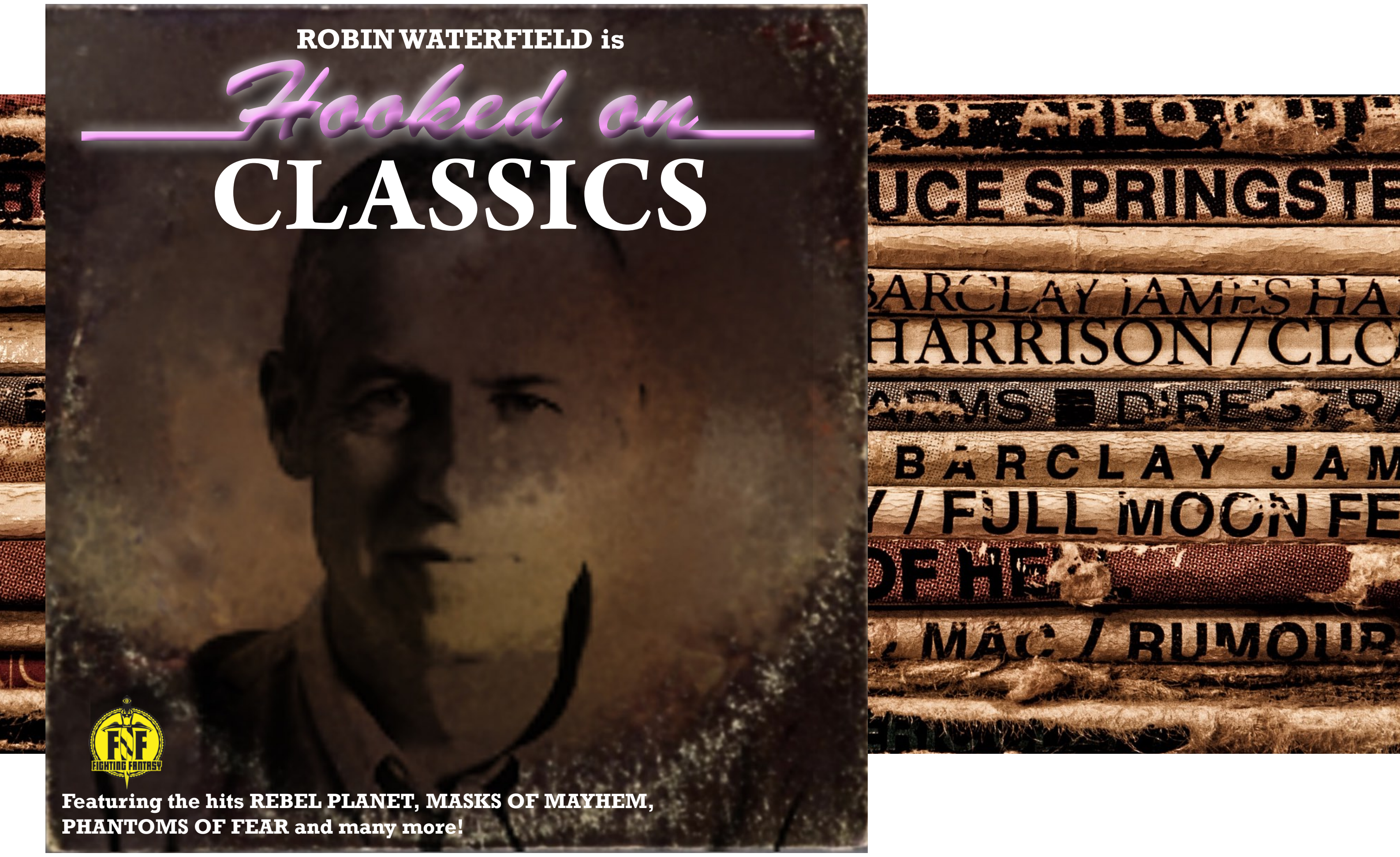
ゲームブック
「少年の旅立ち」
Created by Messiahworks

- 少年の旅立ち by メサイア・ワークス can be purchased for the Kindle for ￥99.

ゲームブック
ミラクル・タイム・アドベンチャー
白銀の騎士と恐竜のなぞ
ポプラ社

ゲームブック
ミラクル・タイム・アドベンチャー
忍者軍団と吸血鬼のなぞ
ポプラ社

- There are two titles in the new ミラクル・タイム・アドベンチャー series, 白銀の騎士と恐竜のなぞ and 忍者軍団と吸血鬼のなぞ, both by 藤浪 智之. These can be purchased for ￥788 each.


FF
FIGHTING FANTASY
Featuring the hits REBEL PLANET, MASKS OF MAYHEM, PHANTOMS OF FEAR and many more!
UCE SPRINGSTE
BARCLAY JAMES HA
HARRISON / CLO
BARCLAY JAM
/ FULL MOON FE
OF HE
MAC / RUMOUR

ROBIN WATERFIELD is Hooked on CLASSICS

He was a consultant editor in those heady, early days of the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks. Robin Waterfield talks to Fighting Fantazine about his experiences.

Interview by ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Robin Waterfield is probably best known for his efforts in the field of Classical Studies, but for a period of time he was both a caretaker of the Fighting Fantasy *series and a writer for it.* Fighting Fantazine *caught up with him to talks about his contributions...*

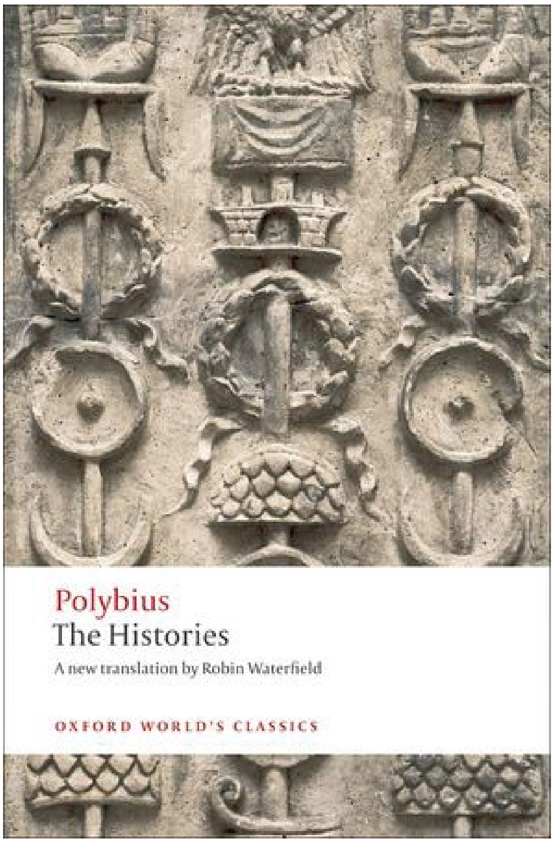
JUST THE CLASSICS — INTRODUCING ROBIN WATERFIELD

What can you share about your background and childhood?

Middle-class typically British upbringing of the 1950s and 1960s. My father was a prep-school headmaster; my mother helped out in the school. My education was equally traditional: boarding prep school, then public schools (Shrewsbury, then University College School, London).

Was writing a career you aspired to?

Yes. I wrote my first novel aged about 6. It was called *The Three Little Kittens* and, though sadly lost, it remains the only book of mine I have illustrated myself. Joking apart, I don't know whether I saw myself as a professional writer in the first instance; by the time I was at university, I wanted to become an academic and a university teacher myself. Writing is an essential part of that career and that pleased me, but I was equally taken with the prospect of teaching. It was only when I lost my university career (thanks to the Thatcher government's depredations on universities – the first round of a horrible on-going saga), that I began to think of writing as something I might try to do full time.


Polybius
The Histories
A new translation by Robin Waterfield
OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

Albums photo © _-0-_ at Flikr, 2013. Used under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License.

Why did Classics draw your interest?

Sort of an accident, really. As I said, I had a traditional British middle-class education. In the 1950s and 1960s, Latin and Greek were still core components of that curriculum. I started Latin when I was 8 and Greek when I was 10. I was good at languages, got a scholarship to Shrewsbury on the strength of them and ended up, on the advice of a teacher, doing Latin and Greek rather than modern languages.

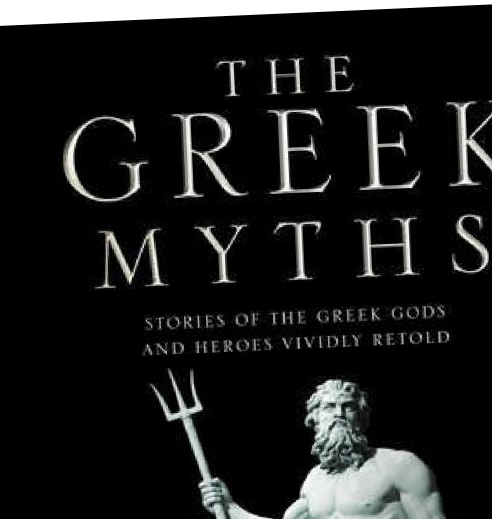
Do you have a favourite Classical work?
Yes – usually whatever I'm reading at the time, just like with modern works!

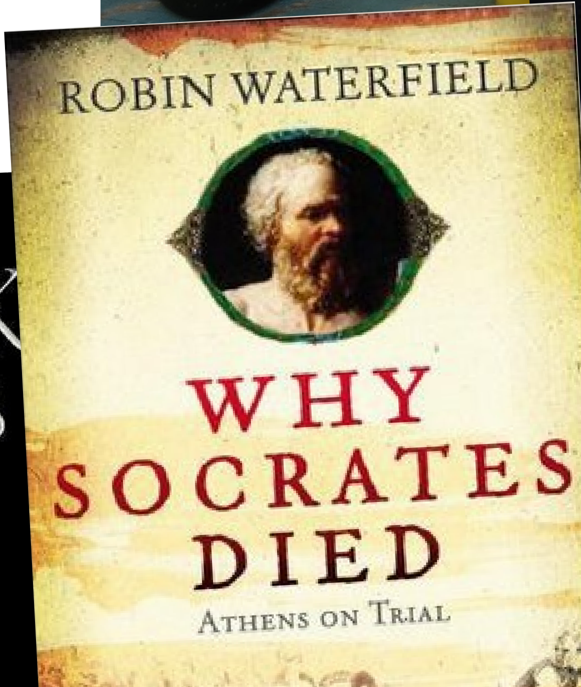
What did you most enjoy about being a Classics lecturer?
Hard to explain unless you've experienced it yourself, but for some people there is a peculiar and great pleasure to be gained from live teaching. I still miss it and not just the pleasurability of it. Every teacher knows that interacting with intelligent students forces you to think about what you're saying, to refine your ideas. So teaching truly is a form of learning too. But if at the heart of teaching is trying to get others interested in what interests you, then I guess I still do that with my books.

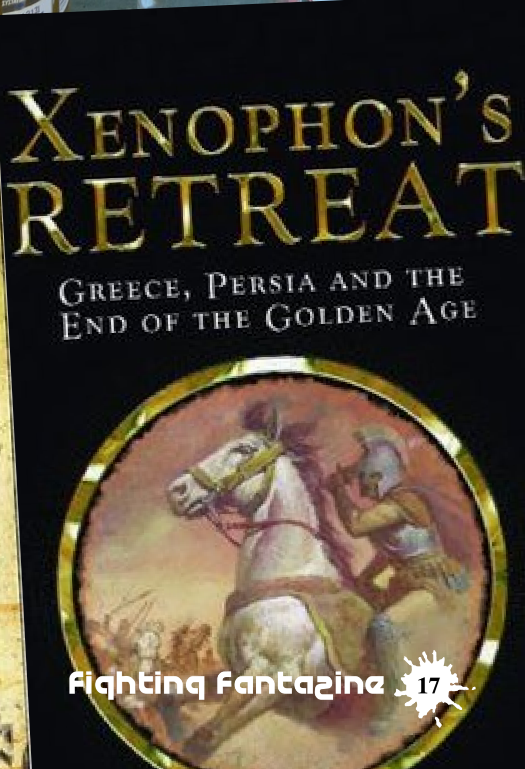
Which academic work of yours are you most happy with?
All of them, none of them, or the most recent one, depending on my mood.

How much interaction with the Classics field do you have now?
Very little in terms of attending conferences, teaching, and that kind of thing. But I have a wide range of contacts and friends in universities throughout the world and my work as a popularizer and translator is respected enough within the universities for them to make use of it. I am the co-editor of an ancient history series published by Oxford University Press, so that keeps me in touch too.

Do you think the study of such material still has a place today in education?
Long ago I gave up trying to defend the study of classics on practical grounds. I love it and some others do too. That is enough for me. But also: classical culture, the culture of the ancient Mediterranean, whether rightly or wrongly, has formed the basis of European (and therefore American too) culture. And it is always a valuable perspective on one's own culture to see where it has come from.


THE GREEK MYTHS
STORIES OF THE GREEK GODS AND HEROES VIVIDLY RETOLD





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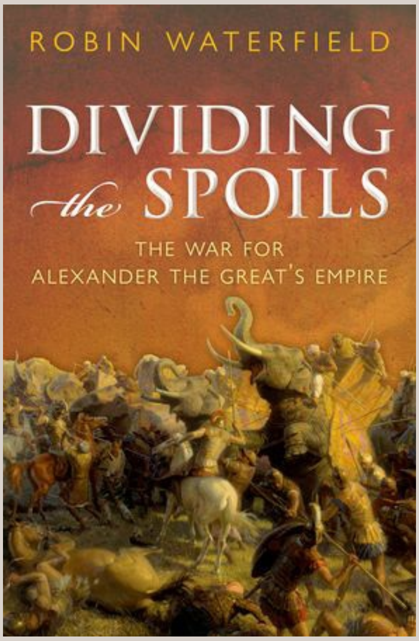

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You've translated a number of Classical works. What sort of things do you have to take into account when undertaking such a task?
In brief, my style of translation disguises the structure, but not the meaning, of the original. That is, I try to make my translations read as good English, not like a translation. My authors tried to write their best, presumably, so I do the same. Translation is not just finding one English word that serves for one foreign-language word and writing it in; it is, literally, the 'transference' of one set of idioms into those of another language. Anyway, that's my philosophy of translation.

Is there a Classical work you'd like to tackle but haven't yet, and why?
I've already translated over half of Plato's *oeuvre* as individual volumes and it might be nice to produce a complete, one-volume translation of the lot. There are a couple of historians – Thucydides for the challenge; Diodorus of Sicily because he needs to be more accessible. But I enjoy translation so much that I'm happy whoever I'm translating.

What are you currently working on in the field of Classics?
I have two big projects on the go at the moment: a translation of some of Demosthenes' speeches and a history book on the Roman conquest of Greece, to be called *Taken at the Flood*.

What hobbies and interests occupy your free time now?
I read a lot, for both work and pleasure, and listen to music a lot – music from the 1960s onwards, totally eclectic but little soul, rap, or bubblegum pop. Kathryn and I are members of a mountain-walking club here in the Peloponnese and we get to visit landscapes as striking as anything Europe has to offer – hidden gorges and so on. I used to do a serious amount of long-distance running, but that's tailed right off now. Did a marathon this year, though – my seventh (not counting one double marathon!). I live on a small farm, making organic olive oil, and I count that as a hobby because I don't make any money from it.

WITH THE STROKE OF A PEN — EDITING FIGHTING FANTASY

How did you come to work for Penguin?
It was when I lost my university job. It was already hard to get a lectureship, but I managed to gain four one-year posts in succession, first at Newcastle and then at St. Andrews. But then, thanks to Mrs Thatcher's ferocious cuts, there were simply no jobs available – or none in my field, anyway, which was ancient Greek philosophy in those days and especially Plato. I already had a young family and could not find a job. Penguin happened to be publishing my first book, so they knew I could handle the English language and I crept through a side door into the copy-editorial department there – the department where typescripts get improved and prepared for publication.

How did you become consulting editor for *Fighting Fantasy*?
There was little in the way of specialization in the Penguin copy-editorial department: you just grabbed whichever typescript next needed working on and got on with it. It so happened that my desk was clear for an early *Fighting Fantasy* book – number 3 or 4, if I remember. So I edited that and then, as it happened, the next few. By then, of course, I was thoroughly familiar with the system and knew Steve and Ian at a personal level. I was bored at Penguin and anxious to leave, and Philippa Dickinson, who was then the commissioning editor in Puffin responsible for the series, asked me whether I'd like to try my hand at writing one. This was just when the series was breaking out: Puffin wanted to greatly increase the number of publications per year and it was more than Steve and Ian could manage on their own, so they began casting around for 'presents' authors. Philippa wanted me to write an SF title, hence *Rebel Planet*. So I left and became a writer (though actually I returned to Penguin for a couple of years a few years later as a commissioning editor, but nothing to do with *Fighting Fantasy*). Once the series opened out like that, submissions began pouring in from fans, especially young fans, around the world. 'I've written an *FF* book. Would you like to publish it?' There was too much work to be handled by the in-house staff at Puffin, so they began to use me as a 'consulting editor', working from home, to assess all incoming proposals and, in general, to run the series. I did that for a few years before getting too busy and passing the work on to Marc Gascoigne (who was always far more steeped in *Fighting Fantasy* lore than I was).

Were you involved in the other Puffin "Adventure Gamebooks" ranges of the early-mid-80s?
I had nothing to do with the first two (*Starlight Adventures* and *Maelstrom*), but I think I might have copy-edited at least one of the *Cretan Chronicles*.

What did you make of the *Cretan Chronicles* gamebooks' series approach to classical material?
I didn't really think of the *Cretan Chronicles* in terms of its approach to myth, just as another series of gamebooks. But the ancient Greeks would not have disapproved: they were always adapting the myths to their own purposes.

Steve
Ian LI
PORT
IAN LIVINGS
CRYPT OF SORCE
ADV GAM
STEVE J and IAN LI
PR
Scorpio
Ian Livingstone
The FOREST OF DOOM
An original fantasy adventure in which YOU are the hero! Complete with combat system, monster encounters and score sheet

What do you see as the appeal of gamebooks?
Accessible (fit in your pocket, carry anywhere with a couple of dice); easy to use; fun to compare tips and tactics with friends; escapist fun.

Do they still have a place in the hearts of child readers today, given the rise of electronic gaming?
I hope so! Books must survive. Books help us to develop our imaginations, whereas games or shows on screen spoon-feed our imaginations.

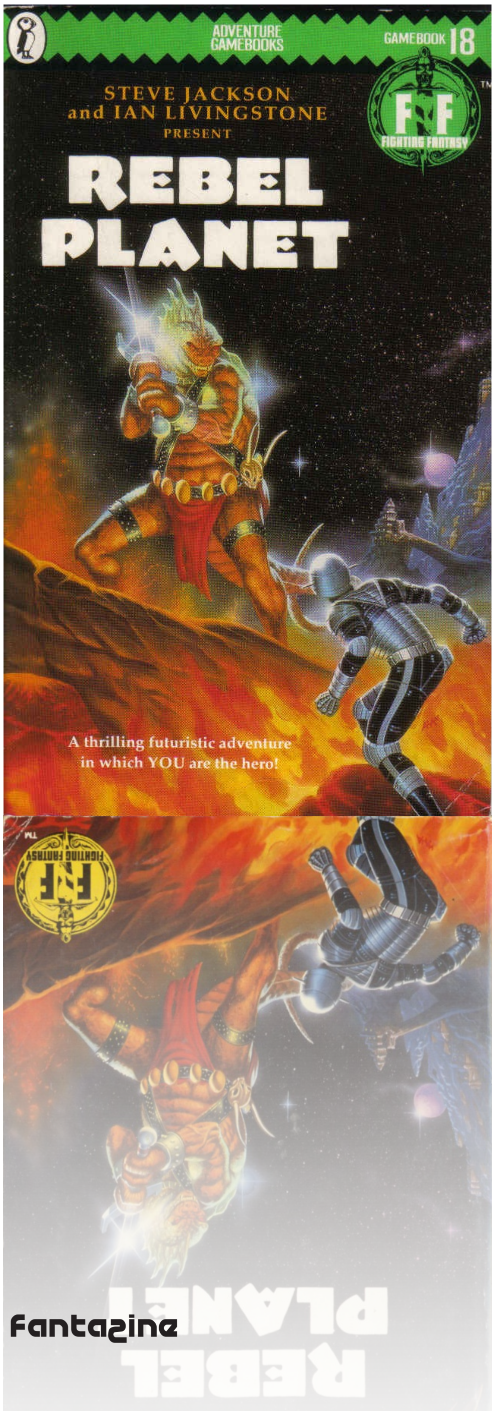
How much influence did you have over which *Fighting Fantasy* titles got published?
Actually quite little, as I recall. My main job was checking incoming submissions and rejecting them. If any had been good, I would have argued for publishing them, but none of them was up to scratch and I received dozens. One or two almost made it. At the same time, Steve and Ian had extensive contacts in the gaming world, as you can imagine, and it was rather through these contacts than through unsolicited submissions that the good material came. My job when such a submission came in would be to play the game and make sure it worked. While I was at it, I would improve the English and punctuation and so on, and send it on for publication.

Do you recall any *Fighting Fantasy* titles that didn't quite make it?
No, none. I was working from home and wasn't privy to decisions taken in the office.

Paul Mason recalls "shocking" you (his word) with his view that the Riddling Reaver was the hero of that book (*The Riddling Reaver*). Is this what you remember?
I don't remember this episode at all!

How was the *Fighting Fantasy* series perceived by Puffin/Penguin?
As a money-maker, chiefly, of course; they were very happy. Publishing is a surprisingly risky business and a successful series can stabilize things, even for a big publisher like Penguin. Then later there was some hue and cry from 'concerned schoolteachers' and so on, along the lines of: 'These books are so popular that kids aren't reading anything else!' To that, our response (I remember giving it, for instance, at a talk on *Fighting Fantasy* I gave at a fantasy conference at Brighton Polytechnic in 1985) was: 'But what a good thing! It gets kids who might otherwise not pick up a book into libraries and bookshops.'

What attributes do you think make a good *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook?
I'm a purist on this. I like the game to be simple, sticking to the original *Fighting Fantasy* system without adding too many gimmicks. The quest, of course, should be worthwhile, the monsters a good mixture of familiar faces and original inventions and the game should be hard but not too hard, to suit a wide age-range of readers. Gameplay should be fast, but sometimes challenging, either as a result of combat or of mental challenges. Not too many clues should be too deeply hidden. There should be several interlocking routes, so that the book is enjoyable to play more than once and you can easily retrace your steps to where you died last time. It should be well written. Each book should also add something to the background mythology of Titan or whichever world it's set on. It should be set up (e.g. in the distribution of paragraphs – one of my jobs) to minimize 'cheating' (i.e. accidentally seeing a future paragraph that might be of some help). It should, simply, be fun. I think we achieved that pretty well.


ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS
GAMEBOOK 18
STEVE JACKSON and IAN LIVINGSTONE PRESENT
REBEL PLANET
FF FIGHTING FANTASY
A thrilling futuristic adventure in which YOU are the hero!

What criteria did you apply for rejecting/accepting unsolicited *Fighting Fantasy* manuscripts?
Nothing abstruse, just the usual. For instance, you would be surprised how many of the submissions I received just didn't work as games: incomplete routes, vicious circles, that kind of thing, with little hope of improvement. It was never difficult to know what to accept and what to reject.

Did you have any input into the five issues that Penguin published of the *Warlock* magazine?
I seem to remember copy-editing them, but I had no more input than that.

Were you involved at all in the launch of the *Fighting Fantasy* novels series in 1989, and what do you think of this step away from gamebooks for *Fighting Fantasy*?
I was involved in the sense that people asked me whether I thought it was a good idea – and whether I wanted to write one! I did think it was a good idea and I did want to write one, but I got overtaken with other work: I was in the middle of my second, and last, stretch in the Penguin office, as a commissioning editor this time. I can't remember what the plot was; my hero was a dwarf, though.

What was the last book you were involved with as a consulting editor?
I honestly can't remember – 38? 39? Maybe Marc can remember which was his first.

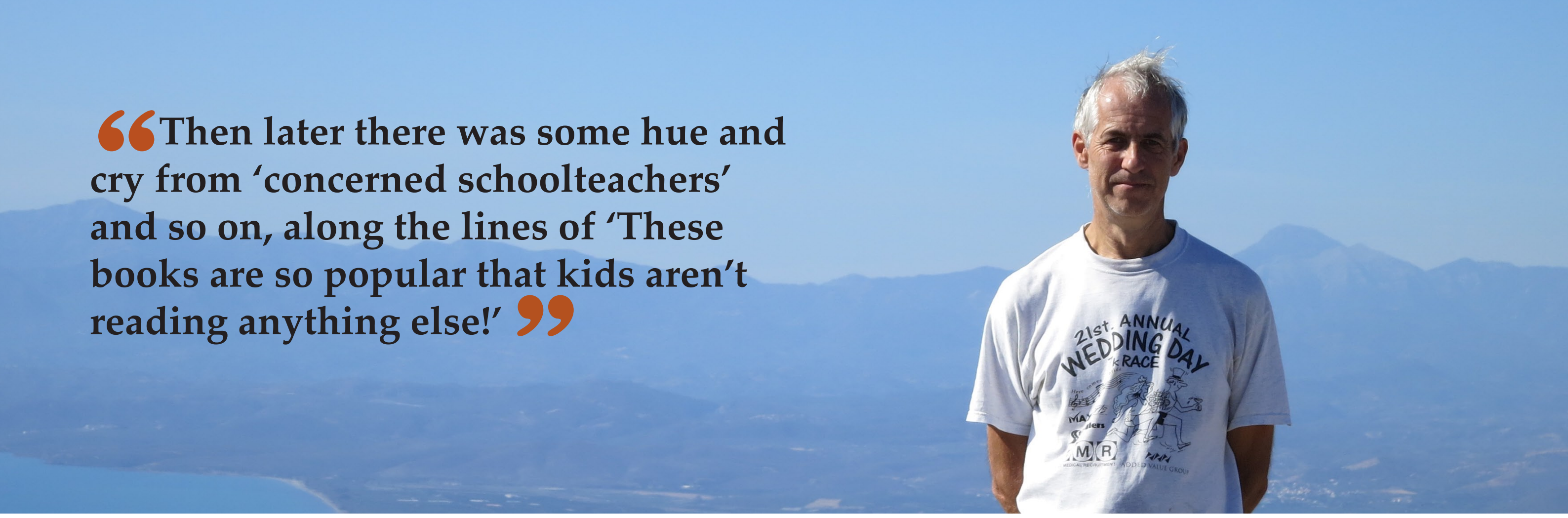
Did you ever get to meet any of the writers and artists who worked on *Fighting Fantasy*?
None of the artists, that I recall, but some of the writers, I would think: Steve and Ian, obviously, and Marc; Luke Sharp; Graeme Davis, Peter Darvill-Evans... some others, but that's all I recall for certain.

The series turned 30 last year and celebrated with a new title. Are you surprised that the interest is still there?
No. Like I said before, I always knew they'd be back. There's a kind of universal appeal in the simplicity and fun of the *Fighting Fantasy* system.

REBEL PLANET — AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE

***Rebel Planet* was announced in *Warlock* magazine as *The Aliens of Arcadion*. Why the title change and did any of your other *Fighting Fantasy* books have working titles?**
I'd completely forgotten that the title changed! This is a very common occurrence in the publishing world. An author submits an idea and it gets accepted under a working title, which is then improved before publication. That's all that happened in this case. I don't think it happened in the other cases.

> “Then later there was some hue and cry from ‘concerned schoolteachers’ and so on, along the lines of ‘These books are so popular that kids aren’t reading anything else!’”



Did you have any say in who illustrated *Rebel Planet*?
No, none – not for that one or for any of the others. That was an in-house decision. I never had any complaints.

What are you feelings about the final art for the book?
Excellent. Thanks, Gary [Mayes].

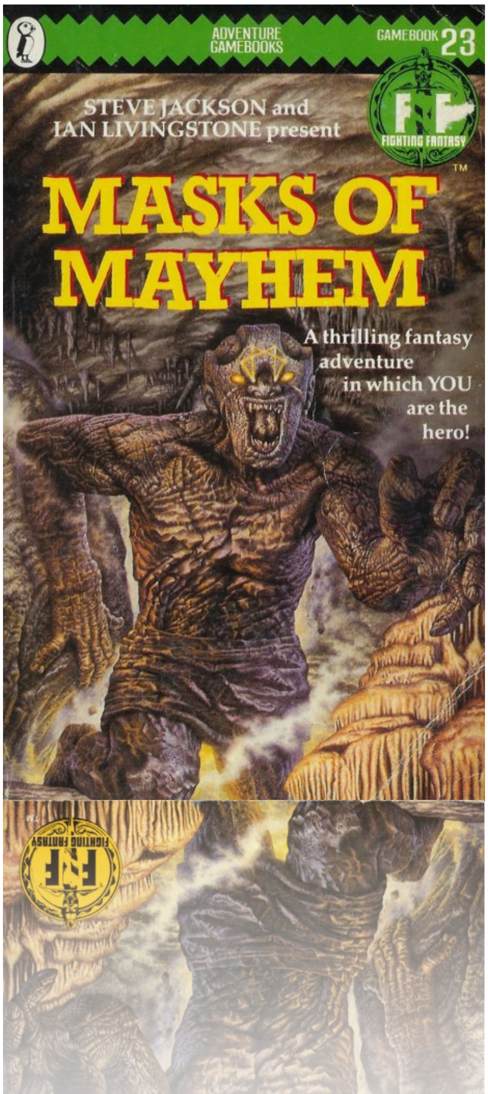
For *Rebel Planet* did you have any particular sci-fi influences that you wanted to acknowledge or avoid?
Nothing in particular; I was pretty well read in sci-fi at the time.

What sources of inspiration, if any, did you draw on for *Rebel Planet*?
Actually, there were a couple of ‘in jokes’ involved in the creation of the book. There was a real organization called SAROS (though the name wasn’t an acronym) and I drew on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life for the different cultures of the different planets: each planet was a kind of archetype. The real Saros was a study group for Kabbala, astrology and so on.

Would you have preferred to have written a fantasy title instead of sci-fi? If so, why?
I suppose in the long run I might say yes, because it was always noticeable that the non-fantasy titles sold less well (and perhaps, since my books seem now to be resisting republication, that has made me one of the less popular *Fighting Fantasy* authors in the long run). But at the time, absolutely not. I was delighted to have been offered the opportunity; it launched me more fully on my career as a writer and I had a blast writing the book.

Why do you think the sci-fi titles didn’t sell as well as the fantasy ones?
Two reasons have occurred to me. One is simply expectations: the series was set up as swords-and-sorcery fantasy and that was what people expected from it. The other was a question of sophistication, if I can put it that way. A medievalist world has to be pretty straightforward to be satisfying (though the sorcery element can introduce fun complications), but a future world should be scientifically far more sophisticated. Yet the *Fighting Fantasy* gaming system is pretty simple: SKILL, STAMINA, LUCK. No tactical nuclear weaponry, computers, advanced communications systems and so on.

Why was there no effort to link the sci-fi titles into one universe/canon, as was done with the fantasy adventures?
Simply, I think, because there were not enough of the SF titles to make it a sensible move; the SF titles were occurring randomly rather than in any coordinated fashion. Perhaps also because, in the nature of things, SF books explore a far wider universe than just one world. But it’s a good question. If there were discussions along those lines, I was never privy to them.


ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS
GAMEBOOK 23
STEVE JACKSON and IAN LIVINGSTONE present
FIGHTING FANTASY
MASKS OF MAYHEM
A thrilling fantasy adventure in which YOU are the hero!

MASKS OF MAYHEM — A TALE OF TWELVE SIGILS

What made you choose the continent of Khul for your first Titan-based fantasy adventure?
That was a very deliberate choice, I remember. I wanted to develop Khul and to make it my own. It left me freer to develop my own ideas for the inhabitants and geography of Khul.

What sources or influences were there for *Masks of Mayhem*?
The sigils came from a nest of ideas that some friends and I were playing around with. If you have a circle with six dots placed at even intervals around the circumference, there are in theory 6! (= 6 factorial) ways that those six points can relate to one another. 6! = 720, but if you link the six dots in all 720 ways, only 12 patterns emerge, which we called the 12 sigils. We found this interesting and perhaps even metaphysically or astrologically significant.

At the time of *Masks of Mayhem*, Marc Gascoigne’s *Titan* was in the works. How much sharing of material was there between you?
A lot, as I recall. I kept Marc informed as to the way Khul was shaping up and of course when his book was ready I edited it (as for all the series), so I was able to check that he had included as much as was relevant from me and had developed Khul in ways that made good sense.

What lessons did you learn from *Rebel Planet* that you took into *Masks of Mayhem*?
None that I recall. I certainly didn’t and don’t feel that *Rebel Planet* is a ‘weak’ book, so that I could do it better next time. They’re just different books.

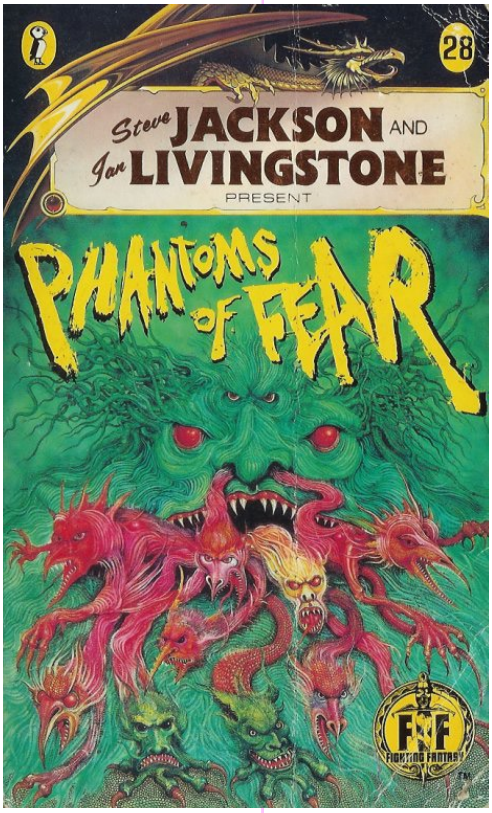
How well do you think Russ Nicholson’s art serves *Masks of Mayhem*?
Brilliantly. We were in close contact over the sigils.

Looking back, how well do you think

***Masks of Mayhem* works as both book and game?**
Fine. I'm very happy with it. It and *Phantoms of Fear* are the best I wrote, I think.

PHANTOMS OF FEAR — WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Between *Masks of Mayhem* and *Phantoms of Fear* the range got a facelift with the cover layout. What did you make of the new look?
I thought the new design was much classier.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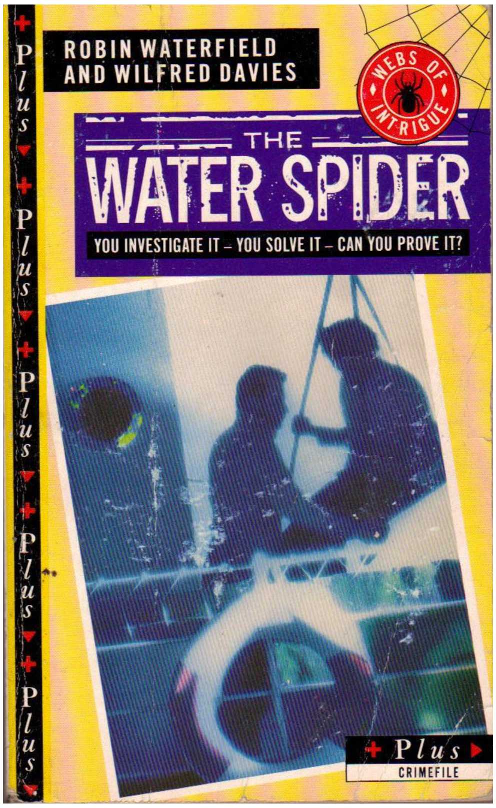
Steve JACKSON AND Ian LIVINGSTONE
PRESENT
PHANTOMS of FEAR
FF
FIGHTING FANTASY

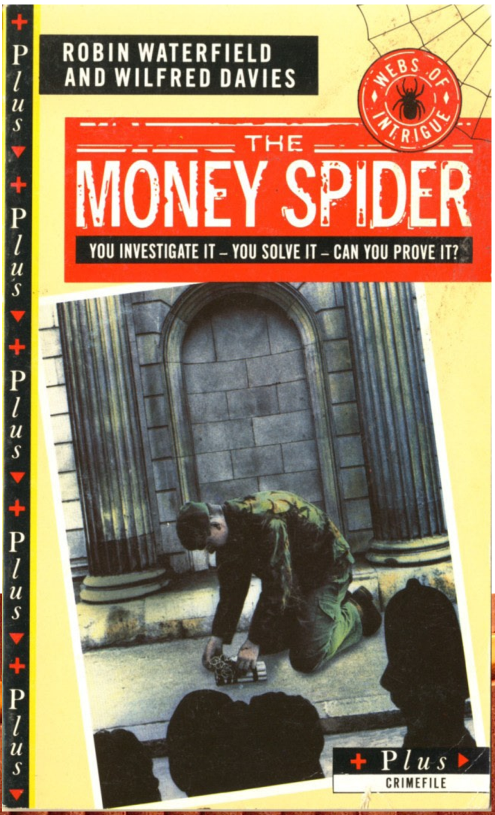
***Phantoms of Fear* marks a departure with a hero who isn't human and has a name: Eldenurin. What was the thinking behind this somewhat radical deviation from the standard?**
I don't think there was any special reasoning any more than wanting to do something a bit different.

Fans have speculated that Eric Rune-Axe, the retired adventurer is meant to be the same character as the old man locked up in the cell in *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*. Is there any truth to this speculation?
No, none at all. Any resemblances are purely coincidental.

Secondly, you featured a part of the book where the player could flip between a dream world and reality. What were you aiming for with this mechanic and do you think you achieved it?
Again, just something different – a way of using the same basic *Fighting Fantasy* rules and principles to make a more extensive game. The device has been both praised and criticized – praised as fun and criticized as making the quest too difficult. It is a difficult quest – but I think it's a good one.

You pair *Phantoms of Fear* up with *Masks of Mayhem* as your better two *Fighting Fantasy* adventures. What makes this and *Masks* stand out from your other titles?
Context, I think. *Rebel Planet* was the first I wrote and so I was bound to be still on a learning curve, even though I was thoroughly familiar with the system. *Masks* and *Phantoms* were the next two: I was even more thoroughly embedded in *Fighting Fantasy* through


ROBIN WATERFIELD AND WILFRED DAVIES
WEBS OF INTRIGUE
THE WATER SPIDER
YOU INVESTIGATE IT – YOU SOLVE IT – CAN YOU PROVE IT?
Plus
CRIMEFILE


ROBIN WATERFIELD AND WILFRED DAVIES
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> **"I was even more thoroughly embedded in *Fighting Fantasy* and really enjoying it. *Masks* and *Phantoms* stand out for me beacuse I was having a ball writing them."**

being the advisory editor and really enjoying it. They stand out for me, then, just because I was having a ball writing them. And because I think they work the best as games, of the four I wrote. I hope they also stand out for the readers too.

Ian Miller did both the cover and interior art for your book. What did/do you make of his unique style?
Brilliant, as usual. You already know I have nothing but praise for my illustrators. They really brought the books alive.

The hero's sword in this book is called "Telessa", a name which you later used in *Deathmoor* for the princess the hero rescues. What were you drawing on for this name?
I can't remember.

After *Phantoms of Fear* you didn't publish another adventure till *Deathmoor* in 1994. Why was this?
I was just busy with other things – with writing other books. I also returned to the Penguin office for a couple of years as a commissioning editor (for the Arkana list). I did not submit any other projects in the interval.

WRAPPED UP IN PLOTS — WEBS OF INTRIGUE

You co-wrote the *Webs of Intrigue* gamebook series with Wilfred Davies. How did this series come about?
I was approached by Liz Atkinson, then the head of children's publishing at Penguin. It was her idea and she asked me to come up with a game system for a detective series. My old friend Wilf (now dead) was very hard up, so I asked whether he wanted to make it a co-authored project.

How did you go about sharing the co-writing duties?
They were divided pretty evenly. Wilf came up with the plots; I wrote them up and turned them into a game.

There are only two titles in the series and the recurring villain, 'The Spider', remains uncaught at the end of the second book. How far advanced were plans for a third book and how many titles did you envisage the series running for?
If the series had been successful, we'd have carried on, like *Fighting Fantasy*.

What can you reveal about 'The Spider'?
Nothing. We went no further than the two books.

How was *Webs of Intrigue* received by readers and the publishers, and why did it end with only two titles?
The publisher seemed to like it okay, but the public didn't. And quite rightly: I found it very hard to come up with a good game system for a detective and I think that while the ideas are good, the books just don't work well as games.

Would you have invited other writers to contribute to the series had it gone on longer?
Who can tell? As a historian, I try to avoid 'what-if' questions!

Steve JACKSON AND
Ian LIVINGSTONE
PRESENT
DEATHMOOR
FF
FIGHTING FANTASY

DEATHMOOR — BACK TO BASICS

Your last *Fighting Fantasy* title was *Deathmoor*. What brought you back to the *Fighting Fantasy* range?
Because I always enjoyed writing them and had a spare few months to do one – and needed the money.

Do you think that the *Fighting Fantasy* output had changed, for better or worse, in the intervening time between *Phantoms of Fear* and *Deathmoor*?
You've put me on the spot here. The quality was always high, I think. But I thought (as I've perhaps intimated earlier in the interview) that the simplicity of the fundamental game system was in danger of getting a bit obscured by extras and gimmicks. This applied only to a few of the titles, but I wanted to write a kind of back-to-basics *Fighting Fantasy* book.

What inspired the content of this book?
Sheer imagination this time, as far as I recall.

***Deathmoor* features two plumbers called Oiram and Igiul. Why riff on the Nintendo characters and did you often do this with character names in your books?**
No, this was a silly one-off. I was heavily into Nintendo at the time!

If you could go back and change one thing about any one of your *Fighting Fantasy* books, what would it be?
I'm sure there would be things to change, but I can't think of anything offhand and I can't be bothered to re-read the books with this question in mind!

What are your thoughts on the demise of the Puffin *Fighting Fantasy* range in 1995?
I've been a commissioning editor myself and I've been involved with publishing from one side of the desk or the other for over thirty years. In that time, I have been puzzled by many publishing decisions, but have recognized the good sense, or business sense at least, in a far greater number of such decisions. Sales of the books were far lower than they had been. In fact, the figures were probably good enough to justify continuing publishing: even in their twilight years, they were outselling many other Puffin titles. But that is not the only consideration a publisher has to bear in mind. A publisher also needs to develop and move on; the relationship with the public over *Fighting Fantasy* titles had got stale. How should they continue to promote them? Yet another change of livery? I think these are the kinds of issues Puffin bore in mind. It certainly was not a lightly taken decision. Oh, and I always knew they'd be back!

Would you write a new *Fighting Fantasy* title if offered the opportunity?
Certainly.

If you could have had an artist illustrate one of your books, who would you have liked to have?
Well, as I already indicated, I was happy with the work of all the artists who worked on my books. If I really (and reluctantly) had to choose... Gary Mayes. He has a very fine line and a good imagination.

Fighting Fantazine *would like to take the opportunity to thank Robin Waterfield for agreeing to the interview. You can keep up to date with Robin's work at www.robinwaterfield.com.*

CHOOSE YOUR OWN DOCUMENTARY™

REAL LIFE ADVENTURES THROUGH THE CAVE OF TIME

Interview by SARAH LESTER

Photos © COLIN ROSS, 2013

Nathan Penlington*'s* Choose Your Own Documentary *(CYOD) is a live, interactive, multimedia performance inspired by the* Choose Your Own Adventure *books of the 1980s. When the performer ordered the first 106* Choose Your Own Adventure *books from eBay a few years ago he serendipitously discovered an old diary hidden within their pages. In between devouring the work of Edward Packard (the originator of the* Choose Your Own Adventure *format) and making a show about spoon-bending psychic Uri Geller, Penlington began to increasingly obsess over the handwritten pages of the found diary. And, thus,* CYOD *was spawned.*

An epic undertaking, which now has over 1500 possible permutations and six different endings, the show has taken on a life of its own. After a sell-out run at the Southbank Centre in London, a visit to the SXSW festival in Texas and a book deal with Headline, ***Sarah Lester*** *caught up with* CYOD *creator Nathan Penlington to talk about the difficulties of writing multiple true narratives, the joys of meeting childhood heroes and the pros and cons of time travel.*

You've created a live, interactive performance using the format of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books. Can you bring me up to date with how far you've got with your show?

So we've made this very awkward documentary, which has become something greater than perhaps we first expected it to be. It started off as an experiment and now it's taken on a life of its own. There are currently over 1500 possible paths, but it could well expand. There are certain narratives that we've opened up that we could go on to explore in the future. I could be making the show for the rest of my life.

Wow, that's quite a commitment! What's the show about and how long has it taken to get to this stage?

I found an old diary around five years ago hidden in a set of *Choose Your Own Adventure* books that I bought on eBay. The diary was so heart-breaking and so compelling in its mystery that it sat in my brain, gnawing away at me, for quite a few years. Then around two years ago I met these amazing documentary filmmakers [Fernando Gutierrez De Jesus, Nick Watson and Sam Smaïl] and we started filming. At that time I wasn't too sure how the story would turn out. All I knew is that I had this diary belonging to Terence Prendergast, which had been in the back of my mind all this time. I wanted to try and find the person who had written this diary over twenty years ago and I had this bizarre idea that the best way to do that would be to make a live, interactive documentary [laughs]. There's nothing like setting yourself a really difficult challenge.

Is this show completely different to anything that you've worked on before?

In terms of the format, I suppose so. But not so much with the content. I tend to be quite obsessive about things - so that's become a theme that keeps cropping up. My last show was about my obsession with Uri Geller - an obsession that was sparked by his vast range of merchandise and his appearances on QVC shopping channel. That show took a turn for the weird when he became obsessed with me being obsessed with him. He came to the show a couple of times and helped me complete a couple of my Uri Geller merchandise collections. So in a way, *CYOD* is similar because it involves me pursuing an obsession past the point of absurdity. And it also involves me forging unlikely friendships, although I really can't give too much away about those.

Okay, fair enough. No spoilers. In terms of *CYOD* being an interactive, multimedia performance, do you think that you're treading new ground?
Interactivity in films and plays has definitely been tried before. The playwright Alan Ayckbourn explored branching narrative in two of his plays – one for children called 'Mr A's Amazing Maze Plays' which most resembles a *Choose Your Own Adventure* as the kids shout out for which room in a house to visit next. In 'Intimate Exchanges' he pushed the memorization of lines to the extreme by having a cast of two actors play the parts of six characters in a play that can end in one of sixteen different ways! In the 80s and 90s there were some film experiments that had different ends. But they haven't really worked for various reasons. There's a terrible film called *Clue* based on the board game *Cluedo* that had three different endings, but the audience couldn't vote for them. The projectionist would randomly decide which reel to play at the end! Or they would wimp out and show all three endings one after another. A film called 'Mr Payback' had joysticks connected to the arm of each chair, but even that novelty couldn't override how awful the film was.

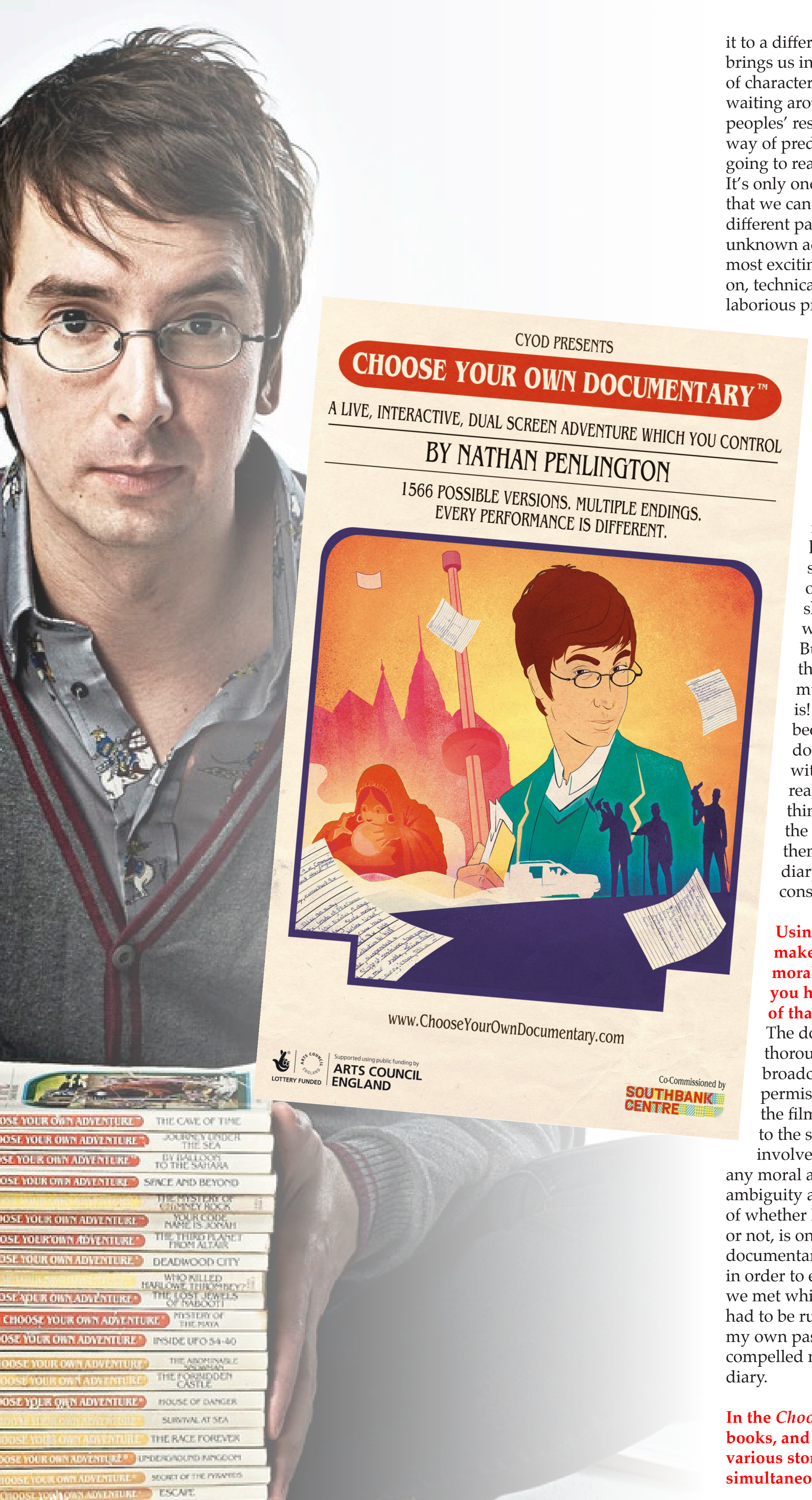
Obviously interactive media has become much more sophisticated these days in terms of YouTube allowing you to have links to other videos, and there's been a recent trend of adverts and apps that are interactive. What makes *CYOD* different is that we've taken elements from those different genres, learnt lessons from them, and turned them on their head in order to tell a true story.

How does the interactive aspect of the documentary work? I've witnessed some disgruntled audience members who have felt cheated that they didn't get the ending they voted for. Do the multiple narratives cause you a lot of trouble?
Everyone in the audience gets handed an electronic voting pad as they take their seat. At key points in the narrative I ask the audience to make a series of choices. The voting is all democratic. What's been interesting is that you get these moments when you have these collective sighs or cheers or whatever it may be. I've had e-mails from people who said that they really enjoyed the show but that every choice they voted for went the other way, so they never got the ending they wanted. They came out loving what they'd seen but at the same time they're still desperate to see the show they voted for. So as an unintentional marketing strategy it's brilliant! But we've worked hard to make sure each storyline is compelling and that you always reach some kind of resolution. Even if it's not the ending you voted for hopefully you'll feel the show is satisfying in some way.

Are there certain psychological tricks you can play on the audience in order to sway them in a particular direction?
I have a background in performing magic and mind-reading, in fact in one route through the show the whole audience has the chance to interact with a trick performed live on stage. So, I have considered the psychological advantages that phrasing sentences in a certain way can have on the choices the audience make. But actually I want to minimise those advantages so that each choice is weighted fairly and it makes it impossible for me or anyone else to guess which direction each particular show might go. I want each show to be an adventure for me, as well as for the audience.

You've spoken about the awkwardness of the show - what have been the biggest obstacles you've had to overcome for *CYOD*?
One of them has been explaining what it actually is to people! Something that I think we've tackled really well is the task of telling multiple true stories simultaneously. Writing fiction in this format obviously takes a certain degree of planning and foresight, but attempting to tell multiple true narratives has taken

it to a different level. The documentary brings us into contact with a whole cast of characters and there's been a lot of waiting around in anticipation of other peoples' responses. Obviously we had no way of predicting how real people were going to react with any degree of accuracy. It's only once we've filmed with them that we can start to work out how all the different paths will pan out. And whilst the unknown adventure element makes it the most exciting project that I've ever worked on, technically it can also be a really laborious process.


THE CAVE OF TIME
JOURNEY UNDER THE SEA
BY BALLOON TO THE SAHARA
SPACE AND BEYOND
THE MYSTERY OF CHIMNEY ROCK
YOUR CODE NAME IS JONAH
THE THIRD PLANET FROM ALTAIR
DEADWOOD CITY
WHO KILLED HARLOWE THROMBEY?
THE LOST JEWELS OF NABOOTI
MYSTERY OF THE MAYA
INSIDE UFO 54-40
THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN
THE FORBIDDEN CASTLE
HOUSE OF DANGER
SURVIVAL AT SEA
THE RACE FOREVER
UNDERGROUND KINGDOM
SECRET OF THE PYRAMIDS
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Co-Commissioned by
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For the audience it should only ever feel like they're experiencing one of those stories at any one time. It's like a technique magicians use, where the focus of attention is so convincingly directed that the audience become unable to see alternative routes or possibilities. We've had a couple of people who've said they think there's only one possible path through the show. Which, in a way, means we're doing a really good job. But what I hate about that is that they don't get to see how much of a mess my brain actually is! The other big obstacle has been the moral elements of the documentary. We're dealing with real stories that involve real people and I've had to think very carefully about how the documentary might affect them. Because of the nature of the diary that's always been a huge consideration from the beginning.

Using somebody else's diary to make a show is a very daring, morally ambiguous move. Have you had to look into the legalities of that?

The documentary has been thoroughly checked through by broadcast lawyers and we have the permission of everyone featured in the film. I think by choosing to come to the show and by choosing to be involved, the audience are implicit in any moral ambiguity! In fact that moral ambiguity and my continual questioning of whether I am doing the right thing or not, is one of the driving forces of the documentary as a whole. But I realised that in order to expect honesty from anyone we met while making the documentary I had to be ruthlessly honest about myself, my own past and what it might be that compelled me to become obsessed with the diary.

In the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, and of course in your CYOD, various stories are technically happening simultaneously, which means you embark

on a kind of time travel. Do you think that's one of the main lures of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books?
I love the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series out of all the gamebook formats. Particularly the ones by Edward Packard, he's a brilliant writer - his sense of humour and his playfulness are incredible. I'm just re-reading *Sugarcane Island* again, which is one of the first books he wrote. Even in that he's written a time-loop into it. You can meet a crazy old man who says something like: "Time goes in circles. I do nothing but the same thing over and over again". And if you choose badly you just end up waking up again and again to find this man looming above you.

[laughs] How many times did you go through that loop before you gave up? Or are you still there?
The other day I went through at least three times, even though I know what happens to you, just to experience the absurdity of it. Now I think of it, I found the diary in *The Cave of Time*, which is the first in the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series. It's essentially about time travel and I've ended up re-creating that book in a way. The diary is the thing that leads me through time. It sounds so ridiculous to say that in a cafe in east London, but we've been through the diary and come out in different places. Not only travelling through time to try and find the person who wrote the diary, but also travelling back into my own past to explore some of the things that might compel me to want to go on that journey.

A lot of people that grew up in the 1970s and 1980s remember the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books vividly. The fact that you got to determine the story made them unique.
Choose Your Own Adventure books give you a set of choices that is highly structured and authored. It allows you to test things out that you perhaps wouldn't have been able to otherwise. With some of the Packard books especially, you've got some moral choices in there, but those don't always have successful outcomes. You might trust someone, but that might end up in failure, or in success.

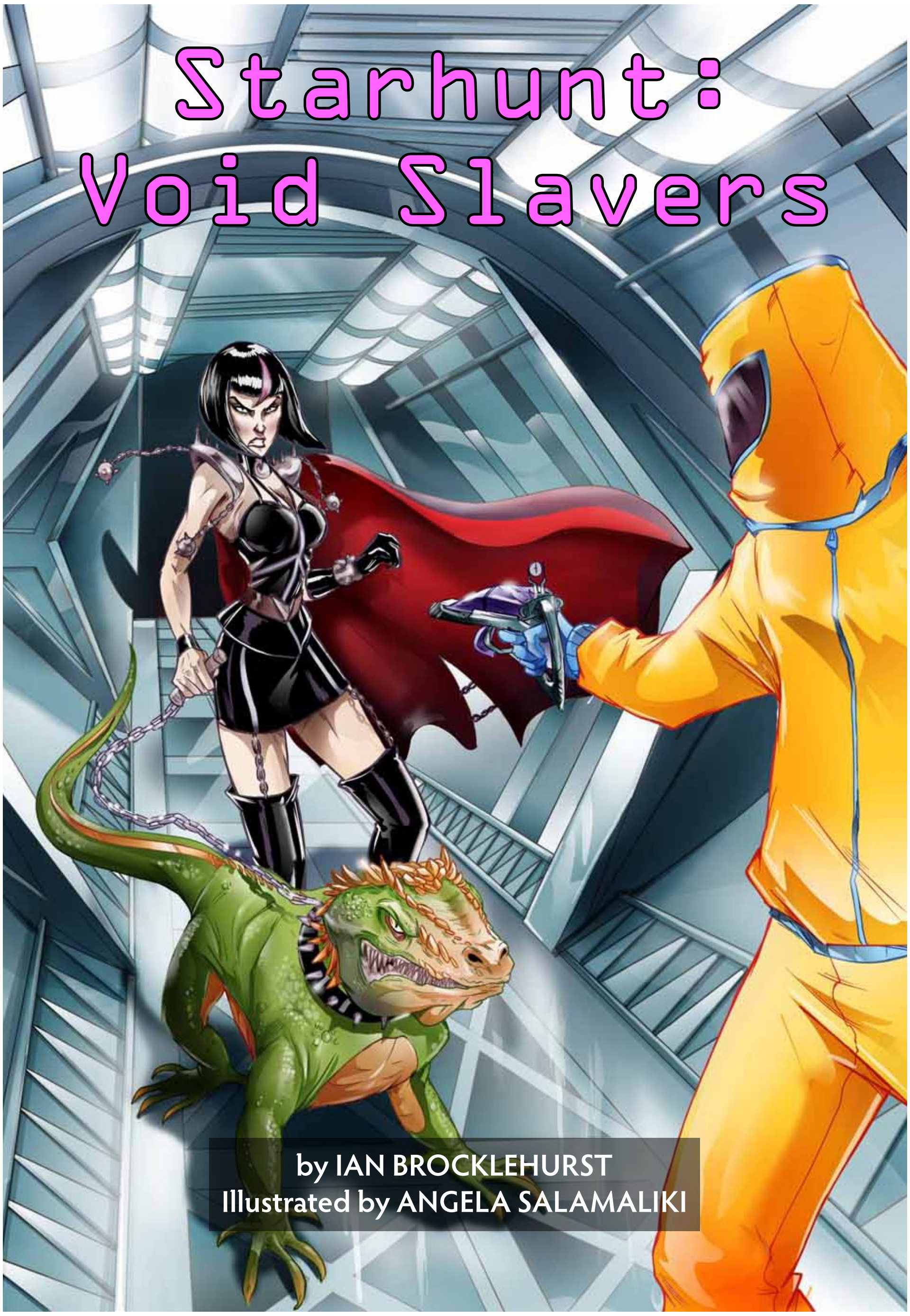
Do you think the books are teaching confusing life lessons?
No! I think they're teaching useful life lessons in that life is confusing. I was talking to Edward Packard about this - you don't always succeed in life. And making the 'right' choice doesn't always mean you succeed. Those themes run throughout his books and he's aware of the complexities of those choices.

How did you make contact with Edward Packard? What happened there?
One of my favourite *Choose Your Own Adventure* books is #21 *Hyperspace*, in which you travel to the 5th dimension and meet Edward Packard. There's a great illustration of him walking towards you with his hand outstretched. And I guess that stuck in my brain. I just got in touch with him and explained what I was doing. I sent him an e-mail thinking 'if anyone's going to understand this, it'll be Edward Packard'. But he didn't [laughs]. It took quite a bit of explaining. Still, he's brilliant in the documentary, like a wise voice of confused reason.

The Bantam Books guidelines for *Choose Your Own Adventure* authors outlined that a third of endings had to be good, a third had to be okay and a third had to be bad. So that means you can die if you make wrong choices. I don't want to give anything away, but as an exclusive for the readers of *Fighting Fantanzine* I can reveal that I've remained faithful to the books in my show. Edward Packard features in two of the six different endings of the show and for one of them he even wrote me my own death – and features in it too. Neither myself nor Edward Packard are actors, but filming that death last year was a truly outstanding moment in my life.

Choose Your Own Documentary *will be on tour from the end of 2013 and throughout 2014. See www.ChooseYourOwnDocumentary.com for dates and locations.*

THROUGH THE BLACK HOLE
THE WORST DAY OF YOUR LIFE
CAPTIVE!
SPACE PATROL



Starhunt: Void Slavers

by IAN BROCKLEHURST
Illustrated by ANGELA SALAMALIKI

INTRODUCTION

You are captain of the stellar freighter, *Starhunt*; aided by your trusted I-Bot co-pilot Kraven-8, you are renowned throughout the Independent Systems for always delivering your cargo on time no matter the load or destination.

You will shortly embark upon an adventure that begins with a visit to the ocean-resort world of Aquatine. However, before you can begin you must determine your strengths and weaknesses and those of the *Starhunt* itself.

There is an *Adventure Sheet* on which you will be able to record your scores and the incidents of your adventure.

Skill, Stamina, Luck and Blaster Skill

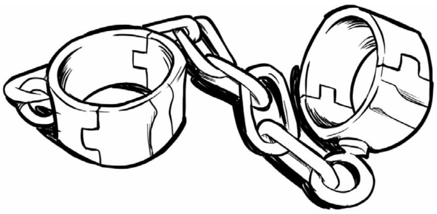
Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the SKILL box on the *Adventure Sheet*.
Roll two dice. Add 12 to the score and enter the total into the STAMINA box.
Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the LUCK box.
Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the BLASTER SKILL box.

Starhunt's Manoeuvrability, Weapons System, Deflector Shields and Hull Integrity

Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the MANOEUVRABILITY box on the *Adventure Sheet*.
Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the WEAPONS SYSTEM box.
Roll one die. Add 12 to the score and enter the total in the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS box.
Roll two dice. Add 12 to the score and enter the total in the HULL INTEGRITY box.

These are your *Initial* scores and you must keep a permanent record of them. Some of these scores may change during the adventure, but they can never exceed the *Initial* score you rolled at the beginning of the adventure. You must keep a record of all changes to your scores and so you should write small or use a rubber.

Your SKILL score reflects your general dexterity and your combat ability when unarmed or using improvised weapons. Your STAMINA is your health, fitness and ability to survive wounds and physical hardship. Your LUCK score shows how lucky you are. Your BLASTER SKILL score registers how well you can handle a blaster in combat situations.



The *Starhunt*'s MANOEUVRABILITY score reflects the stellar freighter's overall flight control; its ability to turn and bank with ease. The WEAPONS SYSTEM score shows how powerful the ship's combat systems are. The DEFLECTOR SHIELDS score represents how effectively the ship can be protected from damage. The HULL INTEGRITY score is the ship's equivalent of health and fitness, which could be called space worthiness; the higher the score here the more likely you will survive ship-to-ship combat.

Unarmed/Improvised Weapons Combat

There will be times during the adventure in which you be instructed to fight an opponent or opponents and you won't have a blaster to hand. You must resolve such encounters as follows.
First record your opponent's SKILL and STAMINA scores on a piece of paper. The scores for each opponent are given in the adventure each time you have an encounter.

The sequence of combat is as follows.

1. Roll two dice for your opponent. Add their SKILL score. This total is your opponent's Attack Strength.
2. Roll two dice for yourself. Add your current SKILL score to this number. This total is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher than that of your opponent, you have wounded them: proceed to step 4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher than yours, they have wounded you: proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next Attack Round from step 1 above.

4. You have successfully wounded your opponent, so subtract 2 points from their STAMINA score unless the text indicates to subtract more or fewer points. You may use your LUCK here to do additional damage (see Using Luck in Combat Situations.)
5. Your opponent has wounded you, so subtract 2 points from your STAMINA score unless the text indicates you should subtract more or less than 2 points. Again you may use LUCK at this stage (see Using Luck in Combat situations).
6. Make the appropriate adjustments to either your opponents or your own STAMINA score (and your LUCK score if you used it).
7. Begin the next Attack Round by returning to your current SKILL score and repeating steps 1-6. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your opponent has been reduced to zero (death or unconsciousness).

Unarmed/Improvised Weapon Combat with Multiple Opponents

If you are involved in unarmed/improvised weapon combat with more than one opponent, at the start of each Attack Round you must decide which single opponent to attack. After choosing one, roll two dice to determine the Attack Strength of all the combatants individually. Resolve your own attack against your chosen opponent as usual. Next, compare your current Attack Strength with those of *all* your other opponents except the one you just fought. Any opponent with a *higher* Attack Strength than yours will score a hit against you, with the usual loss of 2 STAMINA points or as much damage as the text indicates. Remember: you can score hits only against the opponent you chose at the start of the Attack Round.

Using Luck in Combat Situations

During unarmed/improvised weapon combat you always have the option of using your LUCK to either inflict a more serious blow on an opponent you have struck, or to minimize the effects of a blow your opponent has inflicted on you.

If you have landed a blow upon your opponent, you may *Test your Luck* as described previously. If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a heavier blow and may subtract an extra 2 points of damage from your opponent's STAMINA score. However, if you are Unlucky the blow turns out to be superficial and you may restore 1 point of lost damage to your opponent's STAMINA score.

If your opponent has managed to land a blow on you, you may *Test your Luck* to try to reduce the amount of damage you take. If you are Lucky you have managed to avoid the full damage of the strike against you. Reduce the amount of STAMINA damage taken to 1 point (due to the rules of the text this may result in you taking no damage at all). If you are Unlucky, you have received a more serious blow than expected. Subtract an extra 2 points of STAMINA damage.

Remember that you must subtract 1 point from your own LUCK score each time you *Test your Luck*.

Starhunt: Void Slavers
ADVENTURE SHEET

SKILL
INITIAL SKILL =

STAMINA
INITIAL STAMINA =

LUCK
INITIAL LUCK =

BLASTER
SKILL

EQUIPMENT

Starhunt

MANEUVERABILITY

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

DEFLECTOR SHIELDS

HULL INTEGRITY
INITIAL HULL INTEGRITY =

NOTES

During *Blaster Combat* it is impossible to reduce or inflict further damage with such weapons using LUCK. However, as indicated in the *Blaster Combat* Procedure under paragraph 204, it is possible to *Test your Luck* to avoid being hit at all.

Blaster Combat

The rules for *Blaster Combat* can be found under paragraph 204 and during the adventure you will be asked to consult this paragraph.

Solo Ship-to-Ship Combat

The rules for *Solo Ship-to-Ship Combat* are to be found listed under paragraph 205, which you will be asked to refer to during the adventure.

Multiple Ship-to-Ship Combat

The rules for *Multiple Ship-to-Ship Combat* can be found under paragraph 206 and when needed during the adventure, you will be asked to refer to this paragraph.

HINTS ON PLAY

Skill

Your SKILL will not change much during your adventure, and you should change it only if you are given specific instructions in the text.

Stamina

Your STAMINA will change frequently throughout the adventure as you suffer wounds and then recover. You will have in your possession during the adventure 2 food packs and 1 medi-kit. You may eat a food pack or use the medi-kit at any point during the adventure except during any form of combat. Each food pack will restore 4 points of STAMINA, and the medi-kit will restore 8 points of STAMINA.

Luck

At various times during the adventure, either in unarmed/improvised weapon/ blaster combat or when you come across situations in which you could either be Lucky or Unlucky (details of these are given in the text itself), you may call on LUCK to make the outcome more favourable. However, using Luck is a risky business and if you are Unlucky, the results could be disastrous.

The procedure for testing your LUCK is as follows: roll two dice. If the total rolled is equal to or less than your current LUCK score, you have been Lucky and the result will go in your favour. If the total rolled is higher than your current LUCK score, you have been Unlucky and you will be penalized.

This procedure is known as *Testing your Luck*. Each time you *Test your Luck* you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score. Thus you will soon realize that the more you rely on your Luck, the more risky this will become. It is possible during the adventure to restore lost LUCK points, but restored points can never exceed your *Initial* score.

Note: unless the text indicates otherwise, while piloting the *Starhunt* there is no opportunity to *Test your Luck*.

Blaster Skill

Your BLASTER SKILL is unlikely to change during the course of the adventure unless you are given specific instructions in the text.

Manoeuvrability/Weapons System/Deflector Shields

The *Starhunt*'s MANOEUVRABILITY, WEAPONS SYSTEM and DEFLECTOR SHIELDS ratings will never change in the course of this adventure.

Hull Integrity

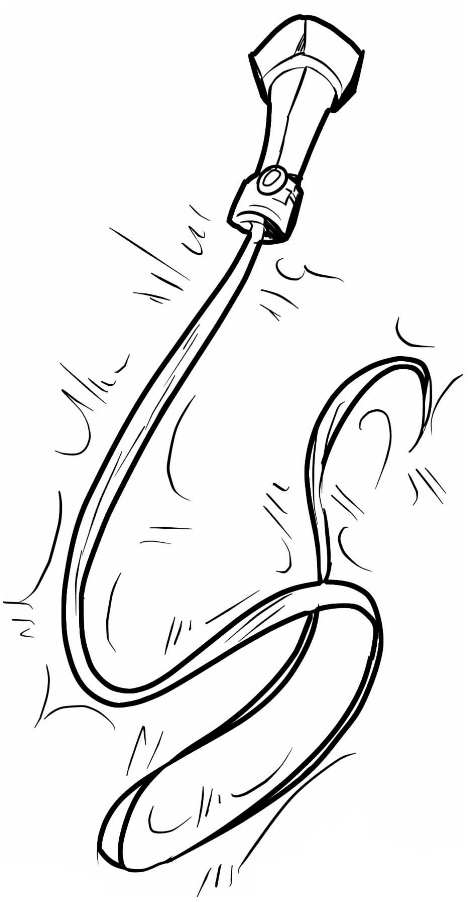
The *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY will be reduced as a result of space combat and hazards. During the adventure there will be occasions where the text indicates that the *Starhunt* can restore lost HULL INTEGRITY points. Otherwise at any point in the adventure, but not during space combat, you may initiate a 'Hull Maintenance Procedure' which will restore 8 HULL INTEGRITY points. This procedure can only be carried out once during the adventure. Your HULL INTEGRITY can never exceed its *Initial* value.

Equipment

At the start of the adventure you may write in the Equipment box on your *Adventure Sheet* 2 food packs and 1 medi-kit. The text will indicate when to add or remove other items on this list. Once used, these items cannot be replaced, so use them wisely.

Notes

In order to successfully complete this adventure you will need to keep a record of any numbers you are given in the text. They may refer to paragraphs you will be asked to turn to, which you will be unable to do if you haven't made a note of them.



BACKGROUND

It is the 37th century and humanity has long since abandoned the polluted Earth and colonized the galaxy. The Milky Way has been found to be teeming with many diverse life forms from countless types of microscopic bacteria to the titanic Milakimon of Vrafnayka VI that stand seventy metres tall. In terms of sentient life, however, human beings remain unique.

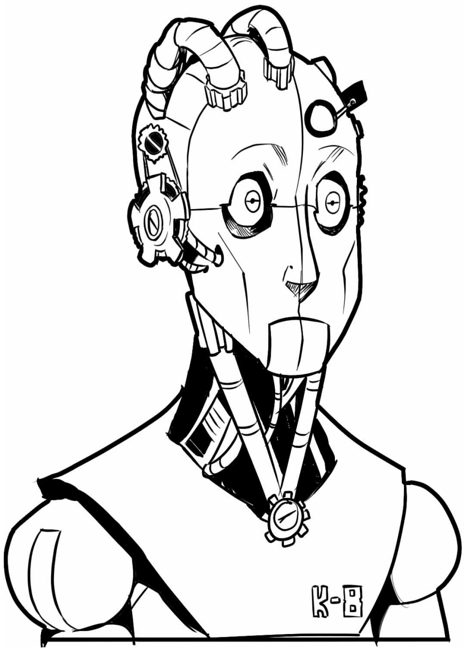
The *Primary Systems* belong to an organization known as the **Terran Central Authority**, which has been in existence for almost a thousand years. At the heart of the **TCA** lie the Core Worlds of Neo Gaia, Avalonian, Kong Jian Gu Xiang and Fuschia Prime. The Terran Council sits on these Core Worlds in a five-year rotational cycle. Another thirty-seven worlds are **TCA** members along with eighty-nine habitable planetary moons.

All members have developed their own cultural way of life, but the **TCA** is a federated coalition of worlds and moons. The **TCA** members are linked by *Language*, *Currency* and *Security*; Terran Basic, Terran Credits and the protective arm of the Terran Spacefleet and the Terran Colonial Marine Corps. Although armed conflict is rare within the **TCA** itself, internal conflict on member worlds is not unknown and border disputes with the *Independent Systems* and *Outlying Territories* are not uncommon.

Bordering the Primary Systems are the worlds and moons of the Independent Systems, which have extensive trading links with the **TCA**, but wish to maintain their own authority for a multitude of reasons. Vega IV was a moon that opted to join the **TCA** a century ago and three hundred years before the present day. During the Trejo Crisis the mining world of Magmatia left the **TCA** and has remained independent ever since.

Beyond the Independent Systems lie the Outlying Territories, which consist of a mixture of worlds that choose to keep to their own affairs and have no links to the **TCA**; only a few worlds have trade links with the Independent Systems. The majority of colonists who settled in this region of space wanted to be left alone for reasons that vary from system to system. Canaan Secundus is a moon whose inhabitants worship the god Yaweh, while the descendants of the Aboriginal Australians inhabit a world known as Uluru.

On leaving the Outlying Territories, a starship would enter *The Void*. There is little known about the colonial exploits that took place here, as these lawless regions of space have not been well researched. It is known that several systems belong to a ruling family of Warlords called the Kazoku, who have held power for at least four hundred years and have been at war on and off with a nearby system for over seventy years. It is a known fact that many space pirates and slavers who can strike deep into the Independent Systems have bases somewhere within The Void.



PROLOGUE

You apply your full weight to the electro-spanner as you try to twist the bolt at the base of the outflow unit of the water reclamation system. The effort strains every muscle in your right arm as you attempt to shift the tight bolt. For the past six days now, the *Starhunt*'s waste unit has been stinking out the stellar freighter and you have finally decided that today is the day to try and do a spot of DIY, which if you fail will result in you having to fork out several hundred credits on a starport repair.

The onboard com-system gives a sharp whistle. 'Captain, you have an incoming priority-coded holo-call.' The voice belongs to Kraven-8, your Hopper Industries Companion Edition I-Bot (Intelligent-Robot) co-pilot.

'I told ya, Kay-8, I'm a little busy right now,' you yell back loudly at your co-pilot. Your words are picked up by the speakers located above the maintenance hole you have climbed into to carry out the repairs.

There follows a short silence, which you react to by loosening your grip on the electro-spanner. Kraven-8 doesn't usually take so long to answer. 'Captain, it is your father calling.'

The electro-spanner drops from your hand and the clang of metal on metal jars your senses as your mind races as to why your estranged father would be trying to contact you.

'I wonder what on Neo Gaia he wants?' you think to yourself before answering, 'I'm on my way.' You climb out of the maintenance hole and make your way to the cockpit.

Kraven-8 waits for you to take your seat next to him before he activates the holo-receiver on the dashboard in front of you. A small blue ball of light appears and then coalesces into the form of your father's head and shoulders. 'H–'

'What do you want?' you demand, cutting off his greeting. 'It's been a while, hasn't it? When was Mom's funeral? Eight... no, nine years ago and not a peep from you since then! So for what do I owe the pleasure...?'

'Shut up,' snaps your father back at you. 'Damn it, you never let anyone else get a word in edgeways. You know I'd only get in touch if it was absolutely necessary. We didn't part on good terms and–'

'Yeah,' you interject again. 'I know how we parted and what was said. I was there and–'

'Damn it, you're doing it again,' your father shouts angrily as a holographic fist waves at you. 'Shut up and listen.'

You shake your head and roll your eyes before turning to your co-pilot. 'Cut him off.'

'Wait,' cries your father with sudden alarm. 'It's your sister!'

Your head turns back sharply towards the holo-image. 'What about her?' You heard the edge in your father's voice and you know that the news isn't going to be good.

'Her dancing troupe was taking a two-week vacation on Aquatine. There was a goddamned slaver raid and... and...' His voice breaks off as he tries to hold back the tears.

'And?' You try not to sound impatient, but you know what he's going to say next.

'And they took her... my little girl's been taken by Void Slaver scum and she'll end as some pervert's sex slave for however long she can...'

'I know all about slavers and their clientele,' you say deliberately, interrupting your father in order to take his mind off your sister's fate. 'When did this happen?'

Your father doesn't answer.

'Dad, please. Tell me how long ago she was taken and I swear I'll do all I can to get...'

'I know you will,' he answers, calmly. 'I finished with the Aqua Polis City Police Services just before I called you. They said the raid took place just under four standard hours ago, which was around 2am their time.'

You glance over at Kraven-8 'Kay-8, how long to star-drive to Aq—'

'Two hours,' is his instantaneous answer. 'The co-ordinates are already programmed into the star-drive.'

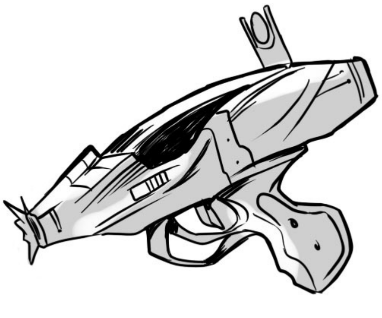
A smile briefly crosses your mouth as you realize your trusted co-pilot is thinking ahead, just as you need him to. You turn back towards the hologram of your father. 'Dad, we're star-driving to Aquatine. I'll find out what I can using the methods I know best. I'll only call if I have good news.'

Kraven-8 cuts off the holo-image and turns his head towards you. 'Our records indicate that Slavers are notorious for having their Slave Marts take place in secret locations within The Void, known only to those with a vested interest in such things.'

'Then let's head to Aqua Polis and find out what we can. I have an old friend there who might be able to help us out.' You buckle up into your chair and push down on the lever that activates the star-drive.

The *Starhunt*'s star-drive engines whine loudly and the stars quickly become blurry streaks as the ship punches past the speed of light and leaves real-space on course to Aquatine.

Turn to paragraph **1**.



1

The fabric of real-space ruptures as the *Starhunt*'s star-drive engines shut down and the ship leaves the slipstream of accelerated time known as warp space and emerges at its destination. The ocean world of Aquatine fills up the cockpit's viewport as you set the navi-computer to autopilot for the pre-coordinated landing. You glance at the information flashing on the small monitor on the dashboard by your hands. It reads:

Planet: Aquatine – an ocean world covered with sporadic tiny islands. Aquatinians live on 4 huge floating cities: Aqua Polis, Mare City, New Atlantis and Aqua Minor.
Class: H - Holiday Resort and Fishing Agriculture
Population: 100 million (Tourists extra 30-50 million)

You unbuckle your seatbelt and spin your chair to face Kraven-8. 'Once we've landed I want you to access the Aqua Politian mainframe and update our files with everything they have on Void Slavers, especially those known to operate within the Independent Systems.'

'Access through the usual channels or should I be more discreet?' By 'discreet' the I-Bot was referring to hacking into the mainframe and taking information that may not be for public knowledge.

'Be discreet,' you reply and tap your co-pilot on his shoulder as you get up to leave. 'It's your forte, Kay-8.'

As you move through your ship to the docking port you stop at your quarters to pick up a jacket and your Astro-Tech® Corp. com-link, a small earpiece that will allow you to remain in touch with the ship as you travel around Aqua Polis, as well as allow Kraven-8 to know your exact location due to its inbuilt spatial-locator. Placing the com-link behind your right ear and switching it on, you continue to the docking port.

'We're going to land in docking bay ninety-four,' Kraven-8 announces into your ear after you hear a slight buzz emitting from the ear-piece indicating its activation.

'Roger that,' you reply, which the tiny microphone on the earpiece picks up and sends back to the cockpit.

As you reach the docking port you can feel the *Starhunt* entering its final descent and hear the landing gear extending. You open a metal locker marked 'Warning' and take out a flick knife and your favourite blaster. Moments later there is a slight judder as the ship touches down. As you tuck the blaster into your belt holster, you hit the opening key for the airlock. The door clicks and as it rises upwards a series of ladder rungs extend outwards, enabling you to climb down the side of the ship into the landing bay. Turn to **72**.

2

'Tell me about Gate 13. It's an access point to Under-Aqua.'

'Give me a moment, Captain, to correlate information.'

There are thirty seconds of silence before Kraven-8 continues. 'Gate 13 is located about twelve kilometres from your current location, close to the station Maximum Heights and it has been closed for access for the past ten days due to a toxic leak.'

'Toxic leak?'

'It would appear the gate is located in the vicinity of a bio-chemical manufacturer and there was an accident that caused the area to be flooded with a poisonous gas. The gas...'

'Okay, Kay-8 I get the picture. Any chance that Slavers could have accessed the city through that gate?'

'Insufficient data present to–'

'Take a guess.'

'If they used re-breathers or wore spacesuits then access through that gate would be feasible.'

You ponder the information Kraven-8 has related to you and wonder if Officer Cassidy has given you the correct gate that the Slavers used to carry out their raid. Turn to **28**.

3

Head-butting the corrupt officer, you shatter her nose and then with a right-hand uppercut you knock her over the edge of the gantry and watch her plunge into the seawater below. She splashes about a bit and shouts for help, but there's nothing you can do as the suction of the pipe is so great that she is soon on her way to the desalination plant. She should have drowned before she reaches there. You decide, having dealt with Cassidy, that it's time to contact the *Starhunt*.

You head back to the hangar quay, jump on the nearest skiff and start up its engine. If you head out to sea you will be able to use your earpiece. Moments later you steer away from the jetty and head along a tunnel illuminated by orange neon lights. Within a few minutes the skiff emerges out into the ocean that surrounds Aqua Polis. You contact Kraven-8 and request an immediate evacuation.

'Local authorities will not take too kindly to a ship leaving its docking bay sans the captain and flying–'

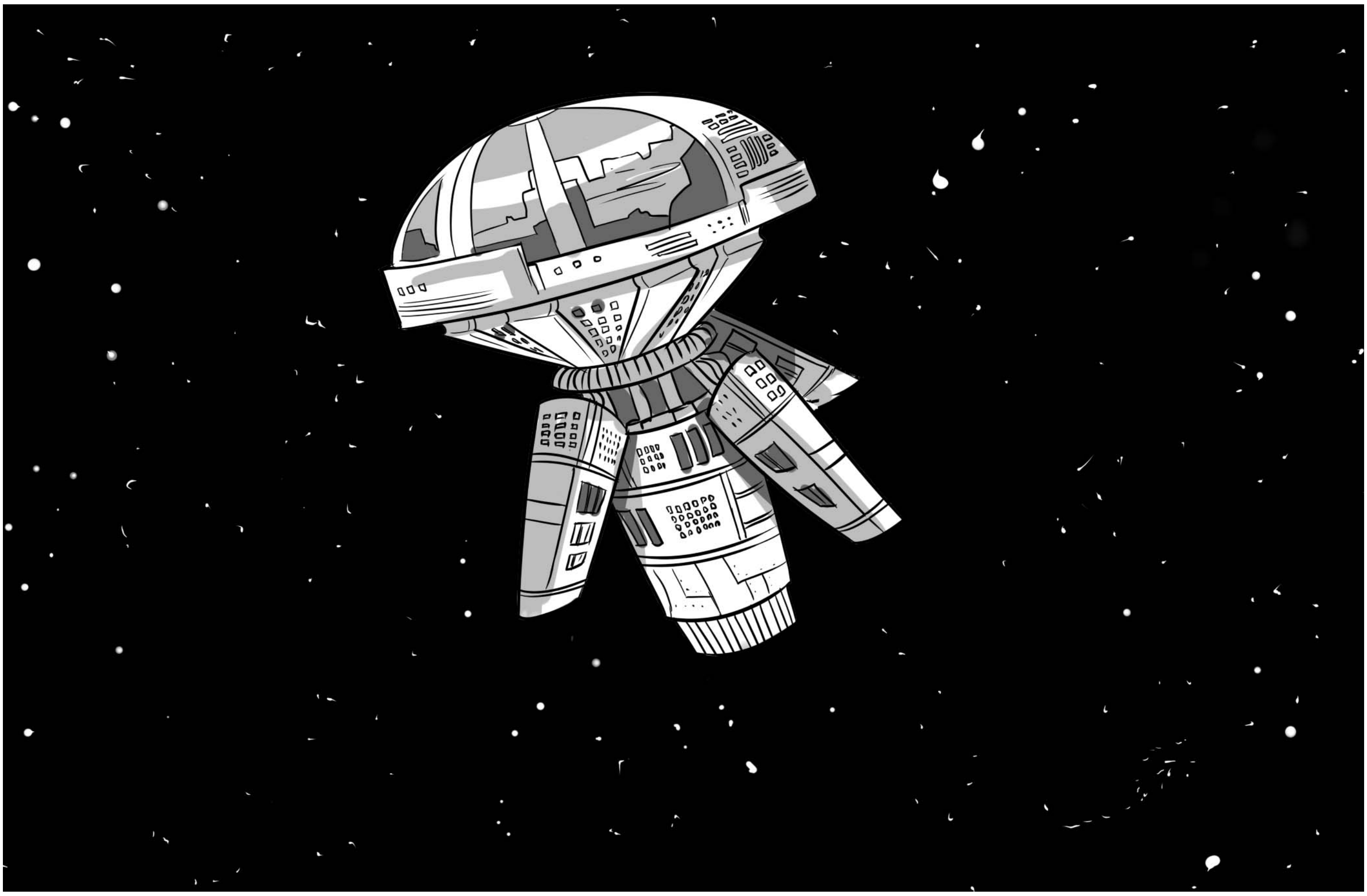
'Get here quickly, Kay-8,' you shout back. 'Our next port of call is Omega.'

Turn to **141**.

4

Your hand hesitates a moment. 'I dunno, Kay-8. Mosa might get away.'

'If her star-drive is compromised then she cannot escape us.'



'Good point.' You slow the *Starhunt* down and turn her to face the asteroid field at the point where the Kalithium trail enters it. You initiate a scan of the asteroids.

Five seconds pass.

Ten seconds pass.

Fifteen seconds pass.

You sigh deeply when suddenly the monitor in front of you flashes a message: *Ion cannon detected.* Your monitor displays an image showing the location of the ion cannon on an asteroid about three hundred metres ahead. *Plasma cannon detected.* Your monitor then displays an image showing the location of the plasma cannon on an asteroid close to the one that has the ion cannon on it.

'Aha!' you exclaim. 'The old ion-plasma one-two.'

'An effective means of destroying a ship.'

'Aye, but not this ship.' You programme a series of commands into the *Starhunt*'s navi-computer and then execute them.

The *Starhunt* zips straight into the asteroid field and as it weaves to and fro around the spinning lumps of space debris, its blasters open fire with precision at both the ion and plasma cannon batteries, destroying them. Turn to **119**.

5

Starport Omega looms ahead menacingly beyond the cockpit's viewport as the *Starhunt* emerges into real-space. As usual you set the navi-computer to autopilot for the pre-coordinated docking sequence required by all starports. You look at the information that the small monitor by your hands is displaying. It reads:

> *Starport: Omega – Run by Governor Maximus P. Ramos, it is the port of call for all traders and merchants who wish to ply their trade in the Outlying Territories.*
> *Type: Refuelling depot and R-and-R hotspot for spacefarers.*
> *Population: 25,000 (workers) visitor capacity 50,000*
> *Armaments: 12 Twin-Linked Plasma Cannons Batteries/ 4 Ion Cannon Batteries/ 3 Squadrons of Mark IIA Scorpion Interceptors (15 ships in total)*

It does not take long for the *Starhunt* to be given permission to dock with the starport and you are soon standing at the airlock waiting for it to open. Your Astro-Tech® Corp. com-link is on your ear and a blaster has been tucked into your jacket's internal holster. You think about your favourite blaster you had to leave on Aquatine and curse yourself for losing such a fine weapon. Still, at least you have a spare blaster for on Omega, unlike on Aqua Polis, there are no restrictions with regard to spacefarers being armed. Of course the Omega Security Service is armed almost as heavily as the TCMC and so anyone who starts a blaster fight on Omega is going to leave in a body bag.

On your *Adventure Sheet* make a note that you have an earpiece, a flick knife and a blaster. Turn to **41**.

6

You open the door and step out onto a ledge that acts as a pathway which runs alongside a flowing stream of murky-looking water covered by a force field. The field must contain the stench, you surmise, as you head to your right and towards the hangar. Turn to **33**.

7

Feeling like you've just been through another death fight, you pick up the prone body of the Sovereigness and move towards the open docking port. A blast of hot Wormwood air greets you as you gaze out at the inhospitable surface beneath the *Starhunt*. Kraven-8 seems to be flying the ship fairly close to the surface. Maybe he thought you'd be the one getting thrown off the ship?

Just as you are about to throw the Sovereigness out of the docking port, the seemingly unconscious woman suddenly becomes active in your arms and before you know it, she has managed to lock her thighs around your neck. Without a word she uses all her remaining strength to pull you out through your own docking port and into thin air!

Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **201**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to **47**.

8

You quickly return the way you came through the manhole cover and head to the bulk-door. Turn to **80**.

9

An asteroid strikes the hull of the *Starhunt* with an ear-splitting clang. The ship suffers 3 points of damage to its HULL INTEGRITY. If the ship is still in one piece, turn to **34**.

10

You quickly rifle through the guy's pockets, but find nothing of interest. You have more luck with the female as you notice a badge on the lining of her filthy jacket. The badge reads: Danäe's Dancing Troupe. You have no idea whether this is actually your sister's badge, but it certainly belongs to her dance troupe. You remove the badge and put it in your pocket. You have a feeling that Arthur's information was accurate. The woman probably picked it up in this vicinity. Turn to **61**.

11

Blasterless, you have time to pull out your flick knife as you look down at your opponent. A dog, apparently augmented with bionic attachments snarls and bares its fangs at you.

BIONIC DOG SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

If you defeat the augmented dog, turn to **64**.

12

You have missed the beginning of the conversation, but you're now able to pick up snippets of information as you listen in.

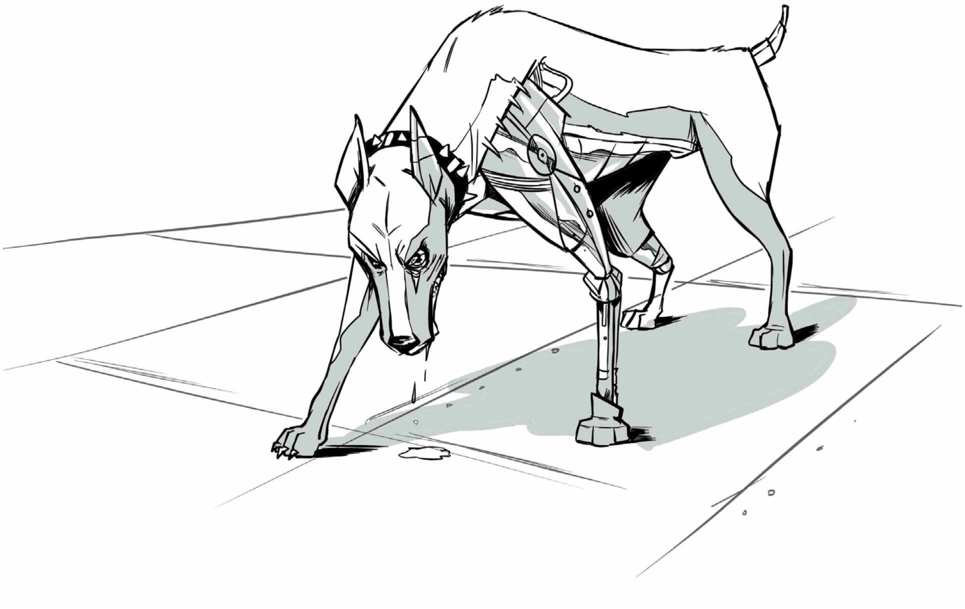
'Now, don't worry,' says a male voice. 'When Collo reaches Omega then he'll transfer the funds to your account on Loth.'

Your mind runs over these points as you listen; Omega is a starport and the gateway to the Outlying Territories, while Loth is a small moon in the Draxis System that is famous for its banking code where no questions are asked.

'Rhea is sorry for the change of plans, but technical problems can and do happen – even to professionals.'

'So', you think to yourself, 'Arthur was right and Rhea Mosa had something to do with the raid that captured my sister.'

'I'm not worried,' replies a female voice. 'I was just a little concerned about how I'd get paid if she was going to Naxosia.'



Naxosia is an Independent System traveller's starport whose Governor sympathizes with space pirates. The last time you were there you got into a spot of trouble with a bar owner and you're probably still on the blacklist.

'To make it up,' continues a different male voice, 'she wants you to have a little up front to show how much she appreciates your help.'

You can't see, but you know that some credits are being handed to the woman. Whoever she is, she must be the Slavers' contact here on Aqua Polis. The woman answers the man. 'Tell her thanks a lot and I'm sure we'll do business again.'

The men bid the woman farewell and move out of your range of hearing. You can hear the woman calling after the two men. 'Five minutes and the cameras will be back online.' You don't hear them answer her, but you can hear an engine revving. It'll be a sea skiff. The two men are leaving and although they might be Slavers who had something to do with the raid that took your sister, you are not too concerned about them. They are small fry compared to the bigger fish such as Mosa and Collo, who is heading to Omega. You can hear the woman's boots as she walks away. You need to get off this world as fast as possible. Turn to **166**.

13

You decide that Officer Cassidy's information must be more accurate than your old friend's so you make the decision to travel to Maximum Heights to Gate 13. Boarding the monorail you justify your decision by accepting the fact that as a police officer, Cassidy would have more accurate knowledge than Arthur. You have to change trains three times to reach your destination.

On exiting the monorail you realize that it has taken almost an hour to travel this far. It does not take long to find the entry port to Under-Aqua. It is a large manhole cover with a wheeled handle located in a small square. However, the gate has been shielded by a protective force field, the control panel to which is protected by a coded encryption that would take too long to crack. Unbeknownst to you, Officer Cassidy was the Void Slavers' contact on Aquatine who allowed them to carry out their raid. She has sent you to the wrong location deliberately. By the time you decide to travel to Gate 79 the opportunity to learn of your sister's whereabouts has passed. All leads have run cold. Your adventure ends in failure.

14

'Let's forget Mosa,' you declare. 'We'll follow up on where we know Collo is. How long till we reach Omega?'

'Ninety-four minutes and seventeen...'

'Let's get going, then.'

Within seconds the *Starhunt*'s star-drive engines whine loudly and the stars become blurry streaks outside the cockpit as the ship punches past the speed of light and leaves real-space on course to Starport Omega. Turn to **53**.

15

Holding your anger in check, you strain to hear what they're saying. Unfortunately, probably due to your Sump Monster encounter, you have arrived after their conversation has started and you can only pick out snippets of information.

'Now, don't worry,' says one of the men. 'When Collo reaches Omega then he'll transfer the funds to your account on Loth.'

Your mind runs over these points as you listen; Omega is a starport and the gateway to the Outlying Territories while Loth is a small moon in the Draxis System famous for its banking code where no questions are asked.

'Rhea is sorry for the change of plans, but technical problems can and do happen – even to professionals.'

'So', you think to yourself, 'Arthur was right and Rhea Mosa had something to do with the raid that captured my sister.'

'I'm not worried,' Cassidy answers them. 'I was just a little concerned about how I'd get paid if she was going to Naxosia.'

Naxosia is an Independent System traveller's starport whose Governor sympathizes with space pirates. The last time you were there you got into a spot of trouble with a bar owner and you're probably still on the blacklist.

'To make up for it,' continues one of the men, 'she wants you to have a little up front to show how much she appreciates your help.'

You can't see, but you know that one of the men has handed something to Cassidy, who smiles broadly at whatever she is holding and then says, 'Tell her thanks a lot and I'm sure we'll do business again.'

The men bid the police officer farewell and move out of your range of vision. You can see Cassidy more clearly now and note she is carrying her blaster. She calls after the two men, 'Five minutes and the cameras will be back online.' You don't hear them answer her, but you can hear an engine revving. It'll be a sea skiff. The two men are leaving and although they might be Slavers who had something to do with the raid that took your sister, you are not too concerned about them. They are small fry compared to the bigger fish such as Mosa and Collo, who is heading to Omega. You watch Cassidy walk away.

You have a quick decision to make. Do you want to jump Cassidy for what she allowed to happen to your sister (turn to **63**), or let her go as you had better head to Omega sooner rather than later (turn to **93**)?

16

Pulling yourself along the ventilation shaft, you move as fast as you can while trying not to make too much noise. As you shuffle along the confines of the enclosed space, you suddenly become aware of voices coming from below. You can't quite make them out, which is annoying as you're sure this is the meeting that Arthur had heard was taking place. There are male voices and a female one too. Just as your frustration grows nearly intolerable, you suddenly have a lucky break as you have crawled up to a grille, too small to see through but from which the voices below are more audible. If you have spoken to Officer Cassidy, turn to **125**; otherwise turn to **12**.

17

You shuffle through the papers and see a lot of doodles on them. Something catches your eye, though – a scribble that reads *Pass code: 153*. Make a note of this number on your *Adventure Sheet* and then head back into the living quarters. Turn to **193**.

18

A hole in real-space tears open as the *Starhunt* leaves warp space. The super gas giant Querto IV completely fills the cockpit's viewport, and its immense size makes you feel somewhat uncomfortable, as your tiny ship seems like a speck of sand compared to the dark orange mass before you. You engage the navi-computer to set course for the nameless fourteenth moon. As you type in your instructions, you scan over the information that appears on the small monitor by your hands. It reads:

> *Planet: Querto IV – a super gas giant orbited by twenty-seven moons; the largest of which is the eleventh moon called Yetria, home to the carnivorous Sand Octopus*
> *Class: U – Uninhabitable gas giant*
> *Population: 0*

'Let's hope we can reach Tarak's hideout undetected,' you say aloud.

Before Kraven-8 can answer, the cockpit is filled by the high-pitched scream of the warning klaxon.

'Me and my big mouth,' you mutter under your breath as you look at the flashing message on the monitor before you.

Three Interceptors approaching: weapons powered, shields raised.

'Three Inferno Fighters approaching on an intercept course,' informs Kraven-8. 'Their trajectory indicates they came from the fourteenth moon.'

'Obviously they came from the fourteenth moon,' you snap back. 'Where the hell else would they come from?'

'I did not mean–'

You raise your hand to cut off your co-pilot. 'I know, I know. Sorry, I'm just a little edgy thinking about my sister. Power up our weapons and divert as much power as you can to the shields. Inferno Fighters are no match for the *Starhunt*.'

Turn to **39**.

19

The *Starhunt* slips out of the hulk yard and just as you are about to star-drive to Wormwood, the warning klaxon sounds at the same time as the ship's communication systems go crazy.

'What now?' you complain aloud as you look at the message flashing on the dashboard's monitor.

> *Mark III Hawk Class Destroyer approaching: Designation* T.S.S WOLFE *– weapons powered, shields raised and 6 Mark V Scorpion Interceptors launched on route to the* RAMA'S CHARIOT.

'A Hawk Destroyer means TCA business,' you think to yourself as you run a hand through your hair.

'Incoming message from the *Wolfe*,' announces Kraven-8. 'It's a holo-call.'

'Let's see who wants to chat, then.'

The holo-receiver on the dashboard in front of you activates and a small blue ball of light appears. It coalesces into the form of the head and shoulders of a stern-looking woman wearing a standard navy cap. Turn to **158**.

20

Peering through the slats of the grille, you manage to make out the backs of two men who are talking to a blonde woman who is wearing a police uniform. No doubt she is the contact that Arthur mentioned was the Slavers' help here on Aqua Polis. Unfortunately, probably due to your Sump Monster encounter, you have arrived after their conversation has started and you can only pick out snippets of information.

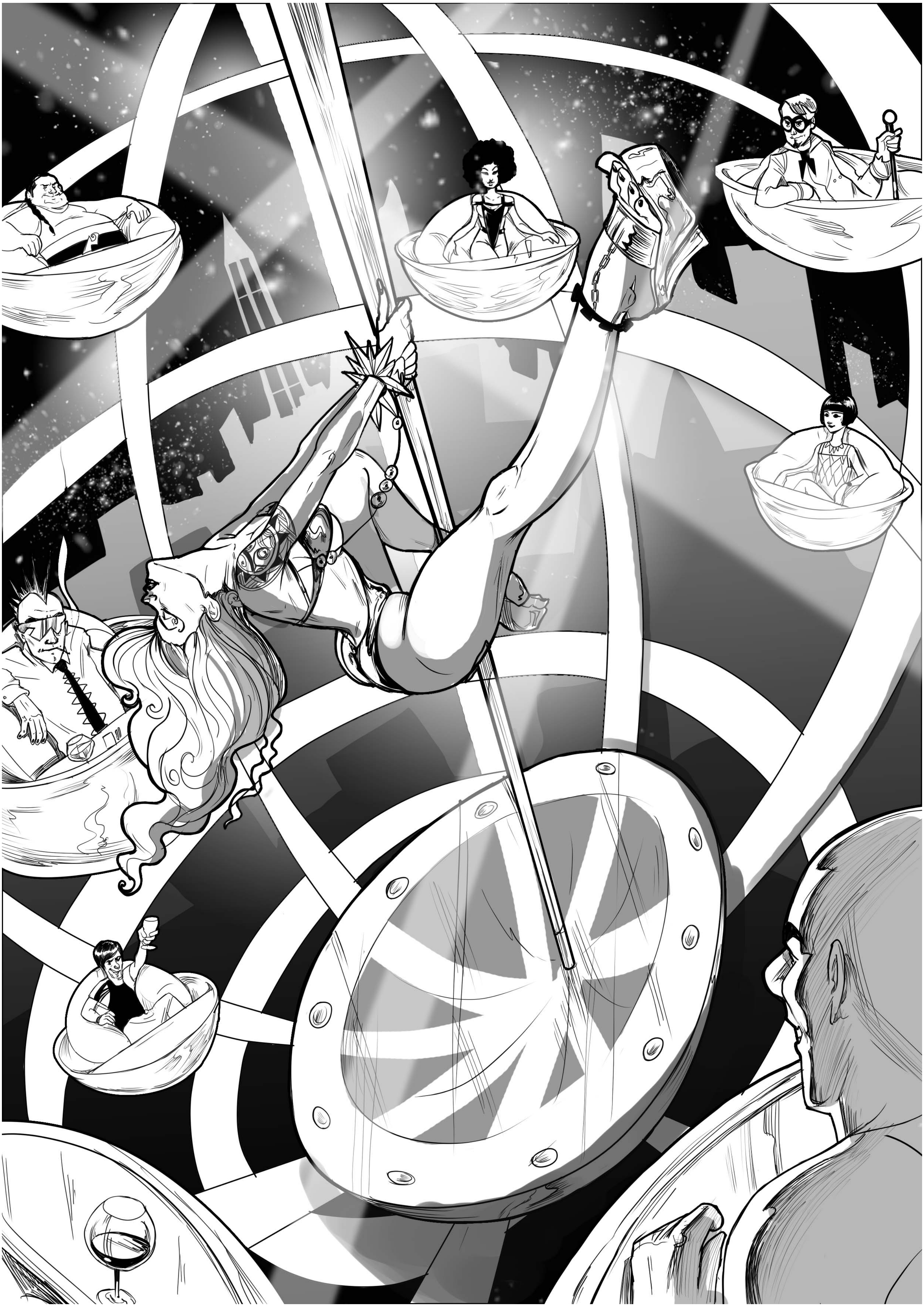
'Now, don't worry' says one of the men. 'When Collo reaches Omega then he'll transfer the funds to your account on Loth.'

Your mind runs over these points as you listen; Omega is a starport and the gateway to the Outlying Territories, while Loth is a small moon in the Draxis System famous for its banking code where no questions are asked.

'Rhea is sorry for the change of plans, but technical problems can and do happen – even to professionals.'

'So', you think to yourself, 'Arthur was right and Rhea Mosa had something to do with the raid that captured my sister.'

'I'm not worried,' the woman replies. 'I



was just a little concerned about how I'd get paid if she was going to Naxosia.'

Naxosia is an Independent System traveller's starport whose Governor sympathizes with space pirates. The last time you were there you got into a spot of trouble with a bar owner and you're probably still on the blacklist.

'To make it up,' continues one of the men, 'she wants you to have a little up front to show how much she appreciates your help.'

You can't see, but you know that one of the men has handed something to the woman who smiles broadly at whatever she is holding and then says, 'Tell her thanks a lot and I'm sure we'll do business again.'

The men bid the police officer farewell and move out of your range of vision. You can see the woman more clearly now and you note she is carrying her blaster. She calls after the two men, 'Five minutes and the cameras will be back online.' You don't hear them answer her, but you can hear an engine revving. It'll be a sea skiff. The two men are leaving and although they might be Slavers who had something to do with the raid that took your sister, you are not too concerned about them. They are small fry compared to the bigger fish such as Mosa and Collo, who is heading to Omega. You watch the woman walk away. You will tell Arthur who you saw and hope the local authorities will deal with her as you had better head to Omega sooner rather than later. Turn to **65**.

21

You walk straight into the main auditorium. There are dozens of small tables spaced out centrally across the large room and attached to the three sides of the building are the 'bubble' rooms. Each of these consists of a female pole dancer performing on an anti-grav platform to patrons hovering around her on anti-grav table. The dancers perform along to music pumping out of the DJ booth located on an anti-grav podium in the centre of the auditorium. Despite being early in the morning there are at least fifty patrons in the room. A Goth-looking waitress approaches you on rollerblades carrying a tray with a small shot glass on it. She stops right next to you and smiles politely.

'Welcome to Fishnet High, this shot is on the house.'

'Thanks,' you reply before downing the shot in one. You know there's barely any alcohol in this free shot, but it has a sweet taste that is pleasing to the tongue. 'I needed that, just got jumped by some malfunctioning ME-Bot outside.'

'Yeah? Bit early for a robotic mugging,' answers the waitress, smiling at her own sense of humour. 'So, what can I get you, Stranger?'

'Your boss,' you answer with all seriousness. 'Tell him the captain of the *Starhunt* has come calling for a favour.'

The waitress looks slightly perplexed, but you wave her away with flick of the wrist, at the same time indicating you will take a seat at the small two-seater table by the far wall.

You don't have long to wait when a middle-aged, bald-headed, beer-bellied white man shuffles over to the table. You stand up with your hand ready to shake his, but he gives a disapproving frown, signalling for you to remain seated and instead he gives you a hearty slap on the back.

'Well, well, well,' he chuckles. 'It's been ages since you were last in my club. What brings you to my neck of the woods?'

As he takes a seat in front of you, you begin by saying, 'This is not a social call, Arthur.' Then you grimace and relate to him the predicament that has befallen your sister.

Arthur shakes his head and then rubs both hands over his bald head before looking around his club as he speaks to you. 'The word on the street is they came through Under-Aqua. They have a contact here in the city; probably a police officer or someone in authority who helped them to breach the security protocols.'

'That would make sense as to how they could make a raid here on Aquatine.'

'Yeah, well after the raid the Slavers usually move their... victims to safe bases until the Slave Mart is announced by the Sovereigness somewhere in The Void and then all parties converge on the Mart and credits change hands.'

'Kay-8 has found some Slaver names known to the local authorities.'

'Want to run them by me?'

Turn to **106**.

22

You have successfully managed to weaken your opponent.

PAINMASTER SKILL 8 STAMINA 15

You must continue the fight until one of you is reduced to a STAMINA score of 0 or less. If this is you, then your adventure is over as your skull is caved in and your death is a kinder fate than what will happen to your sister when she is sold at the Slave Mart. If you defeat the Painmaster, turn to **48**.

23

Again there seems to be no one around. 'They don't expect anyone to be sneaking in,' you think to yourself, 'so of course there aren't squads of armed guards running around.' You see on a door to your left the letters 'E14' painted in yellow and you recall from the computer terminal layout that through that door the Slavers have created a detention centre.

'Kay-8,' you announce into your earpiece.

'Captain?'

'There's going to be a prison break shortly, so expect all hell to be unleashed. Out.'

You walk over to the doors and they slide apart allowing you to walk through. Turn to **114**.

24

Your leap falls short of the opposite side of the crevice. Your clothes spontaneously combust seconds before your burning body splash-lands in the lava flow. You did not suffer long, unlike your sister, whose remaining years will be of untold misery and abuse. Your adventure is over.

25

'No time for scans, Kay-8' you answer as you guide the *Starhunt* into the Mardavian Asteroid Field at the point where the Kalithium trails enters it. The ion cannon blast strikes hard, rocking the ship violently and causing several alarms to sound within the cockpit.

'Shields down,' informs Kraven-8. 'We are defenceless.'

An ion cannon isn't designed to destroy a ship; merely render deflector shields useless. Without shielding, any blast weapon can easily penetrate a ship's hull.

The monitor in front of you flashes a warning. It is the last thing you will ever read: *Plasma cannon lock detected. Raise shields.*

There is a bright flash and then nothing. Your adventure has ended.

26

'Look,' you snap back. 'I owe a lot of credits to some... nasty individuals and I need to make the cash quickly. I heard that the death fighters were here on Omega, so I thought to myself "why the hell not?"'

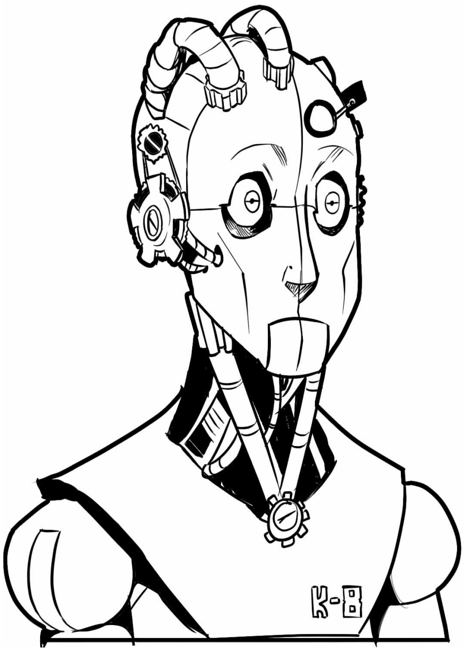
'We've been operating here for a few months now,' answers the Mohawk man.

'Governor Ramos is a big fan. Have you got any serious medical conditions?'

'None that I know of.'

'Well, our resident doc will check you out just in case. Follow me. The name's Orlando.'

He beckons for you to follow him through the curtain. Turn to **115**.



27

As you guide the *Starhunt* back through the asteroid field in order to star-drive, your piloting skills are once again put to the test.

Roll 2 dice and compare it to the *Starhunt*'s MANOEUVRABILITY rating. If the number rolled is lower than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **58**. If the number rolled is equal to or higher than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **9**.

28

'Tell me all you can about the Under-Aqua entry port, Gate 79.'

'Give me a moment, Captain, to correlate the information you have requested.'

There are a few moments of silence before Kraven-8 continues. 'Gate 79 is located about six kilometres from your current location near the station Tranquillity Central and it has been closed for access for the last four days due to the death of...'

'I know,' you interrupt. 'A Centi-crab killed someone.'

'Yes?'

'Arthur mentioned it. Do you think it's the place where the Slavers could have launched their raid from?'

'Insufficient data present to...'

'Hazard a guess, Kay-8.'

'The area would be quiet as no one has been using that gate recently and so it would be a good place to sneak into the city unnoticed.'

You reach the entrance to Zulu Farm Station. Turn to **89**.

29

As you head towards the bulk-door your eyes glance over the re-breathers and the fish hooks on the wall. You wonder why there are fishhooks hanging on the wall in what appears to be a sewer control room; maybe for fighting off giant rats? If you choose to take a re-breather and a fishhook with you on your journey, make a note on your *Adventure Sheet*. Turn to **80**.

30

Through your viewport you watch the stricken Stellar Tug veer to the right with thick smoke venting from one of its engines. The tug reaches about three hundred metres from your position before it disappears in a fiery explosion.

'The Weland-Bergstein Annihilator Class Destroyer Escort is on the move,' says Kraven-8. 'It appears to be leaving the hulk yard and is escorting a Hammer-head Freighter.'

Hammer-head Freighters are so called for their hammer-head cockpit design and like the Stellar Tug you destroyed, are built by the Waystar Corporation. In fact the Hammer is the company's top selling model and there are over ten million of them employed in service throughout the galaxy.

'Plot us an intercept course,' you instruct Kraven-8. 'If they star-drive before we get near it's unlikely we can determine their intended destination.'

'Course already inputted.'

The *Starhunt* reverses slightly before banking hard to the left and zooming off at full speed. Turn to **165**.

31

A blow strikes the back of your head. Take 3 points of STAMINA damage. Officer Cassidy has tried to knock you out with the handle of her blaster, but she hasn't caught you well enough to do it. Your right elbow connects with her solar plexus and she gasps for air. Her blaster slips to the floor and you kick it aside as the two of you grapple at each other's throats. As the two of you stagger around the gantry you find yourself upon, you are oblivious to the fact that you are fighting above a large container of churning seawater that has a pipe sending it to the desalination plant to be converted into drinking water. Officer Cassidy is putting up a good fight.

OFFICER
CASSIDY SKILL 10 STAMINA 14

If you can reduce Officer Cassidy to STAMINA 8 in five rounds or less of unarmed combat, turn to **3**. If you cannot reduce Officer Cassidy's STAMINA to 8 points in five rounds of unarmed combat, turn to **175**.

32

Through the bulk-door, you enter an enclosed corridor that leads straight ahead a short distance to another door with a sign on the wall by it that reads 'Hangar Quay'. You are about to walk through the door when the thought strikes you that the quay is likely to be a large place and, unlike the small rooms you've passed through so far, if there is someone already in there you will be easily spotted. Panic starts to set in as you consider what your next move should be when your eyes look up and spot an access panel in the corridor's ceiling. It is likely a ventilation shaft. As the ceiling is not too high, you find it easy to jump up and push aside the panel before scrambling into the ventilation shaft. You feel confident that the shaft will take your weight and you slowly crawl along towards the hangar quay. Turn to **16**.

33

Being careful with each footfall you follow the path along until it reaches a wall with a door set into it. The stream of filth flows through the wall in a vent level with the door. You open the door and step through into a large room at the top of a flight of metal steps, which you descend. The floor of the room contains four large vats that are set deep into the ground. The stream of filth is being diverted and siphoned off into each vat. As you reach the bottom of the steps the stench suddenly assails you. You start to choke profusely and fall to your knees, gagging for fresh air. Did you bring a re-breather? If you did, turn to **81**. If you did not, turn to **42**.

34

As soon as the *Starhunt* clears the final asteroid blocking your way, you bank to the right. Just as you are preparing to activate the star-drive engines, the communication system buzzes at the same time as a blue light flashes repeatedly above your head, indicating an incoming transmission.

'Emergency broadcast,' announces Kraven-8.

'Let's hear it,' you answer as a look of curiosity crosses your face.

'Attention space freighter,' begins the voice of a young woman. 'This is the bulk transporter Quantum Echo. We have been struck by an asteroid and are venting hydrogen from our starboard engines. We are in need of assistance. We are at co-ordinates 1701.77. Can you help?'

If you wish to investigate the call for help, turn to **109**. If you choose to ignore it then proceed to **186**.

35

'Captain,' interrupts Kraven-8. 'We are now clear of the planet's gravitational pull. We are all set to star-drive.'

'Looks like it's goodbye for now,' says the hologram of Arthur. 'Be safe, my old friend and let me know how things turn out.'

'Will do,' you reply with a brief salute to the hologram before you deactivate the holo-receiver. You glance over to your I-Bot co-pilot. 'How long would it take to reconfigure the star-drive to take us to the Mardavian Asteroid Field?'

'One minute and thirty...'

'Got it.'

You must now decide whether to star-drive to Omega (turn to **14**), or follow up on Arthur's lead and head to the Mardavian Asteroid Field (turn to **44**).

36

'Slaver,' you yell as you wrestle Collo to the floor and start to bang his head against the floor. 'Where's the Slave Mart, scum?'

Collo puts up quite a fight and as you roll around on the floor, you feel something sharp jab you in the abdomen. You stand up and see a small knife in Collo's right hand. An agonizing burning pain suddenly sweeps through your body and you collapse to the floor. As you writhe in agony, blood starts to flow from every orifice of your body. The last thing you hear before your body surrenders to death is Collo's laughter and his comment, 'That blade was coated in venom from an Argivian black viper.'

Your adventure is over.

37

'What did you mean by Raiders moving their abductees to safe bases before the Mart is called?'

Arthur absent-mindedly scratches his nose as he relates the following to you. 'Well, from what I've heard, a Slaver carries out a raid or two and then they take their unfortunate captives to holding cells scattered throughout the galaxy. There they wait until the location of the Slave Mart is arranged and then they'll move all their prisoners on the day of the Mart directly to its location within The Void.'

'Heard of the location of any Slaver bases?'

'No, afraid not; I reckon they're to be found in asteroid belts, uninhabited moons or anywhere in The Void.'

'How long after a raid does the Slave Mart happen?'

Arthur shrugs his shoulders. 'Don't know that either. I can't imagine Slavers wanting to feed prisoners for weeks on end so maybe there isn't too much time between raids and when the Sovereigness calls a Slave Mart. You know there will have been other raids today beyond the one here on Aquatine.'

'Yeah, well I'm only interested in the one that happened here today.'

'Of course, of course.'

If you wish to ask Arthur about the Sovereigness, turn to **129**. If you have asked all you need to know, turn to **70**.

38

As soon as you see Collo moving, you activate the airlock's com-system.

'Mr. Collo,' you begin. 'I'll keep this real short. Rhea Mosa took my sister and her dancing troupe on Aqua Polis. Ms. Mosa's slaving days are over. Her prisoners were transferred to you. Now you can do one of two things. Tell me where my sister is now or tell me the location of the Sovereigness's Slave Mart.'

'I tell you where the Mart is and she'll have me fed to her Drogs.'

'Failure to inform me of one or the other,' you continue, 'will result in you being spaced. You won't live long in the vacuum without a spacesuit to hand.'

Collo remains silent. You activate the airlock's decompression sequence.

As the klaxon sounds, Collo suddenly looks animated. 'Are you insane?' he yells. 'This is murder!'

'Slavery's a crime too.'

'I can't tell you where the Mart is.'

'Where's my sister now? Is she here on Omega somewhere?'

'No, no. I came here for the fights... my merchandise...'

'Prisoners, Mr. Collo. You deal with human beings not household goods.'

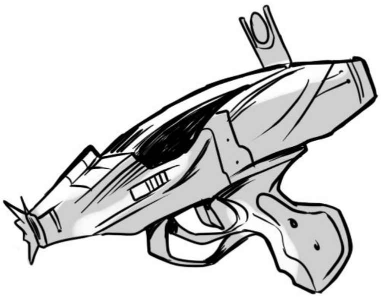
'The prisoners are on one of Lixor Tarak's bases. The fourteenth moon of Querto IV.'

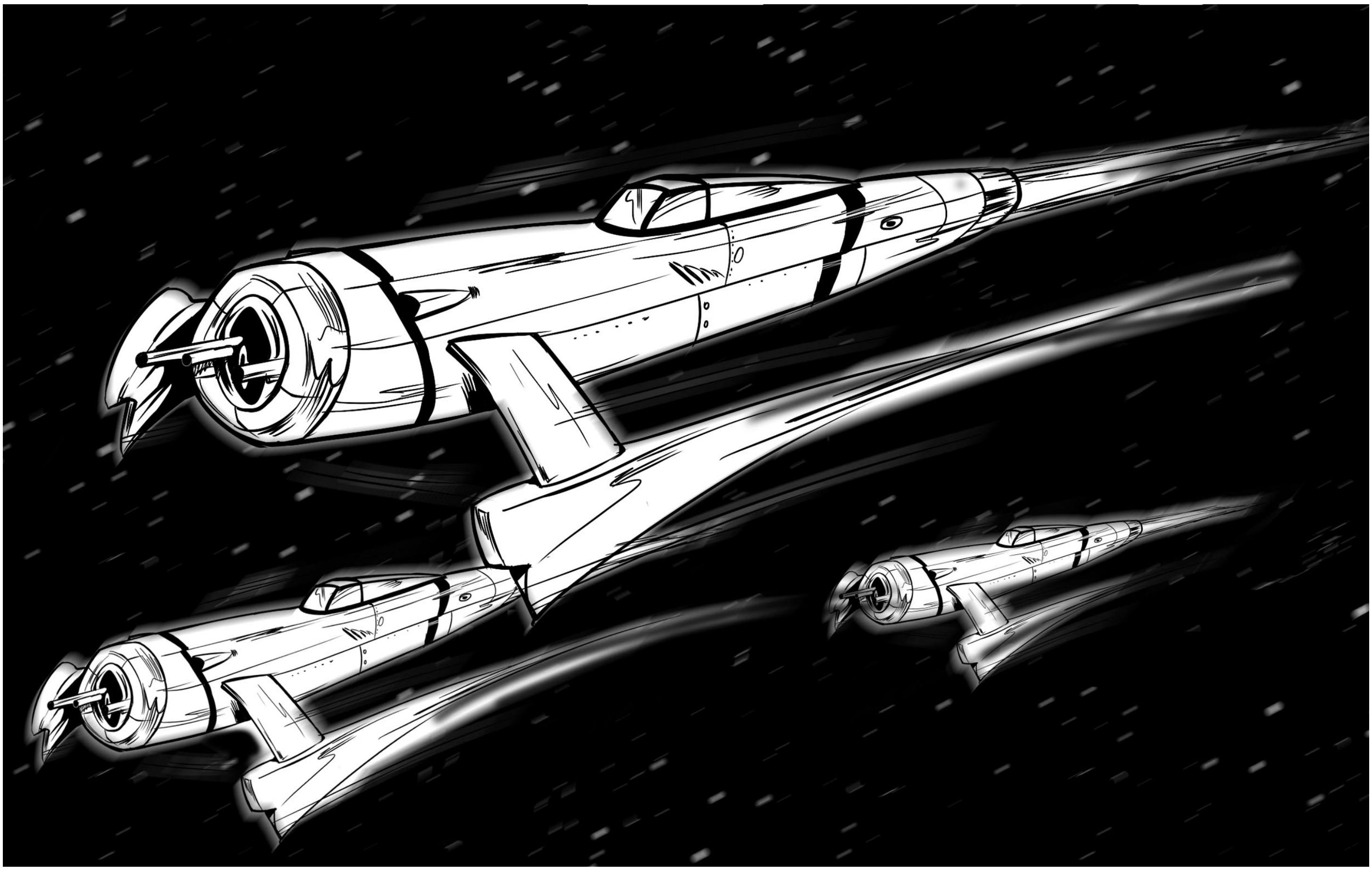
The final countdown to decompression commences.

'The fourteenth moon?'

'Yes! For god's sake, let me out!'

If you wish to let Collo go free, turn to **55**, otherwise turn to **159**.





39

The *Starhunt* is ready to engage the approaching Inferno Fighters, which don't bother to initiate communication. Three on one might seem like hopeless odds, but your modifications to the *Starhunt* over the years will come as a bit of a nasty shock to the space jockeys of the Inferno Fighters.

INFERNO FIGHTER 1	WEAPONS SYSTEM 9 DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 14 HULL INTEGRITY 12
INFERNO FIGHTER 2	WEAPONS SYSTEM 7 DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 13 HULL INTEGRITY 10
INFERNO FIGHTER 3	WEAPONS SYSTEM 8 DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 13 HULL INTEGRITY 11

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **206** to resolve this combat. If the *Starhunt* reduces all the Inferno Fighters to HULL INTEGRITY 0, turn to **71**.

40

As you tumble out of the *Starhunt*, you manage to throw off the Sovereigness and you attempt to grab the ladder rung on the side of the ship. Despite the exhaustion of your recent close-combat fight, you somehow find the energy to catch hold of a rung. Your body impacts against the side of your ship, jarring you violently, but you cling on for your life. As the terrible winds batter you, you manage to look down to see what became of the Sovereigness. You fail to catch sight of her tumbling body, but you can see that you just passed over the caldera of a large volcano. She must have plunged straight into it! Painstakingly slowly, you start to clamber up the ladder rungs.

On pulling yourself back inside your ship, you force your aching body to its feet and let your hand press the lock-activation button of the docking port. As it starts to close you stagger away from it to find your sister anxiously approaching you.

'The Sovereigness?'

'Her reign is over.'

'What next?'

You give a brief shrug of your shoulders. 'Best let Dad know you're in one piece and then I'm off for a long shower before I decide how to spend fifty thousand credits.'

Your sister frowns at you in confusion wondering how you have fifty thousand credits.

'Captain Means wishes to thank you,' announces Kraven-8 over the ship's internal com-system.

You answer through your earpiece. 'Tell her I'm busy catching up with my sister and take us into orbit.'

'Affirmative.'

'Oh, and Kay-8?'

'Yes, Captain?'

'Plot a star-drive back to civilization.'

THE END

41

It does not take long to pass through the security check, where you verbally promise not to cause any trouble nor use your blaster in anger. You head on into the starport, mingling with several other spacefarers who have just arrived. As you pass through the open blast-doors with the sign 'Welcome to Omega' written above them, you immediately walk over to the nearest available computer terminal in the arrivals lounge.

You slump into the booth and activate the touch screen, bringing up the interactive keypad. 'Give me the address,' you whisper into your earpiece.

As Kraven-8 dictates, you type the address into the terminal. Within seconds you have an answer.

'Lower deck, sub-level beta, suite sixteen,' you inform Kraven-8 as the screen shows you a 3D plan of the starport and how to reach that address from your current location. 'That was easy.'

'Check the terminal for information on sub-level beta.'

'Okay,' you type in a search for sub-level beta and frown at the results. 'What?'

'Captain?'

'Sub-level beta is a restricted zone, having been rented by the ISRFA who admit guests only. ISRFA?'

Within seconds Kraven-8 has a reply. 'Interstellar Raw Fighting Association.'

'Damn, death fighters!'

Although the acronym had initially thrown you, you have heard of the ISRFA. They organize no-holds-barred fights where it is not uncommon for participants to be left comatose or worse.

'Collo must be a fan,' you think aloud. 'No way he's a fighter.'

'Restrictive access to sub-level beta may cause a problem for us.'

'Yeah,' you sigh. 'This rescue is becoming trickier and trickier.' You rack your brains about how next to proceed when an idea slips into your mind, 'Jiflakoes!'

'Captain?' exclaims a confused Kraven-8.

'Jiflakoes is a bar,' you explain as you type the name onto the terminal so you can find the place. 'I've been there once or twice over the years. It's the place where all the action is, if you know what I mean.'

'By action, you mean illegal activities.'

'Illegal is a strong word, Kay-8. It's certainly a place to do shady business, hear gossip and possibly get myself lined up to be a death fighter.'

There was a moment's silence. 'Is that a wise plan, Captain?'

'Wise? Hell, no,' you answer; making a mental note of the route to Jiflakoes, 'but it's the only plan I've got. I'll be in touch.' You end the conversation and make your way to the starport bar. Turn to **82**.

42

You are choking to death on the noxious fumes of human waste. You force yourself to your feet and turn to climb back up the steps, but the effort is too great. You manage to take about three steps before you collapse again and as your face goes purple, your body shuts down through lack of oxygen. It will be several hours before your body is discovered. Your adventure ends here.

43

Suddenly the cockpit is filled by the high-pitched scream of the warning klaxon.

'We've got company, then,' you grumble as you look at the flashing message on the monitor by your hands: *Mark IIIB Stellar Tug approaching: weapons powered, shields raised.*

'Its weapons have been upgraded,' informs Kraven-8, 'and they're scrambling our communications.'

'Guess they don't want to be friends, then?'

Turn to **143**.

44

The *Starhunt*'s star-drive engines shut down and the ship is immediately catapulted from warp-space into real-space. You have reached the Mardavian Asteroid Field. Glancing down at the small monitor on the dashboard by your hands you quickly read over the information it's showing you.

> *Mardavian Asteroid Field: interstellar asteroid body – a known haunt of space pirates and fugitives from justice.*

'Fugitives from justice, eh? Guess that applies to us, Kraven-8.'

'Affirmative, Captain.'

Your fingers dance over the console in front of you and you initiate a scan of the vicinity. Small pieces of asteroid float by, catching your eye, and as a precaution you divert more power to the ship's deflector shields. Within seconds the monitor on the dashboard is flashing. *Ionized Kalithium detected: concentration 45%.*

'Kalithium leakage would indicate a damaged star-drive,' reasons Kraven-8. 'I can confirm the trail of Kalithium skirts along the edge of the asteroid field a few parsecs and then turns directly into the field. At our present location we cannot detect anything within the interior of the field.'

'No? We'll have to enter the field then, to get a better reading. Arthur said Mosa had a star-drive problem. I'll bet this trail is from her K.I. cruiser.'

'Logic would support your hypothesis.'

'Good for logic.'

Your fingers type in a few commands on the console and the *Starhunt* is soon following the trail of leaking Kalithium. As you get closer to the spot where the trail veers into the Mardavian Asteroid Field, Kraven-8 breaks the silence of the cockpit.

'Captain, before we proceed I recommend scanning the surrounding asteroids. It is not uncommon for pirates and their ilk to booby-trap asteroids with space mines or ion cannons.'

You must decide whether to ignore Kraven-8 and enter the Mardavian Asteroid Field (turn to **25**), or run a scan of the surrounding asteroids (turn to **4**).

45

You take a seat on the black leather sofa and pick up a holo-disc that on activation reveals a copy of the Aqua Polis Herald. Moments later, Officer Cassidy returns with a take-away coffee, which you thank her for and start to drink. Unfortunately for you, the coffee has been laced with a powerful but tasteless narcotic that quickly renders you senseless. Cassidy is a corrupt police officer and is in fact involved with the Void Slavers, for it was with her help that they were able to carry out the early morning raid. She makes a call to her associates and a short while later your unconscious body is taken by a couple of burly men, who deposit you into the city's sewer system. Your prone body soon attracts the rats. Luckily for you, you never regain consciousness as the rats feast on your living flesh. Your adventure ends here.

46

You pick up the papers and see they have a lot of doodles scribbled on them. Something catches your eye though, a scribble that reads: *Pass code: 153*.

You hear a shuffling noise coming from the living quarters. Maybe Collo's coming round?

Make a note of this number on your *Adventure Sheet* and then if you wish to check the computer console, turn to **144**; otherwise you head back into the living quarters (turn to **193**).

47

As you tumble out of the *Starhunt*, you manage to throw off the Sovereigness and you attempt to grab the ladder rungs on the side of the ship. Alas, exhaustion from your close-combat fight catches up on you and you fail to catch hold of a rung. You follow the Sovereigness into the caldera of an active volcano. Your sister is safe, but your adventure ends in death.

48

'Amazing!' cries the commentator. 'It's a rookie victory!'

The spectators go wild with applause and celebratory shouting.

Battered and bruised, you are led out of the caged ring and back to the changing room area, where you immediately rinse the blood off your body with a long shower. After drying and changing back into your clothes and collecting your belongings from the locker you put them in, you are met by Orlando and another middle-aged white man with dyed-black hair.

'I have to say I wasn't expecting you to win,' says Orlando, 'but that was one helluva fight.'

'Thanks,' you wearily reply.

'Anyway, obviously you'll want your winnings and although we can transfer them to any bank account you provide details of, I have a sneaky suspicion that you would prefer your credits in cash.' You nod your head, indicating that you would prefer cash in hand.

'I thought so. Now, before you decide to up and leave, would you like to hear this gentleman's proposition? He's Bo Collo and he sponsors a lot of Death Fighters.'

You hide your surprise very well as you reach out and shake Collo's extended hand.

'That was an amazing performance,' says Collo. 'I think you have a real talent and you shouldn't let this be your only fight. Orlando says you've got some money problems?'

'Yeah, I owe the Metaxas brothers thirty-five thousand, which I really need to pay off.'

'Ah, the Metaxas brothers of Oberon Minor? They've a bit of a reputation of kneecapping those who cross them. I'd hate to see you kneecapped since it'd put you out of the ring.'

'Yeah, I'd hate to be kneecapped too.'

Collo laughs. 'Nice sense of humour too. Why don't you come back to my quarters and we can have a private chat. Orlando can send your winnings to my suite. I want to talk about how you can become one of the Death Fighters that I generously support so I can regularly bet on their victories. I have to be honest and say my money today was on the Painmaster... but I don't hold my losses against you. I'm a business man by nature and I know a good deal when I see one.'

'What's your business?' you ask, matter-of-factly.

'I sell things. Nothing particularly exciting; stuff for home use.'

Your blood starts to boil as you connect your sister with the term 'home use', but you keep your anger in check as you know that you need to go to Collo's suite and be alone with him if you want to force your sister's location from him.

'What's your answer?'

'Okay, Mr. Collo. I'll hear you out, but I'm not making any promises.'

'You will, you will,' Collo says with a grin as he leads you out of the changing room.

As you pass him, Orlando salutes you and says to expect your winnings shortly. Turn to **86**.

49

You walk through the doors and immediately the five scantily clad girls in the holding cell jump to their feet.

'I don't believe it,' cries your sister. 'What are you doing here?'

'Dad said you and the troupe were in need of a rescue,' you answer, 'so who else was he gonna call for help?'

The holding cell has an energy field covering the front of it that prevents anyone from escaping and which is easily deactivated by flicking a switch. You notice that the girls have their ankles locked together with a set of magni-shackles.

'We need to get those off you, otherwise this rescue's over before it begins.' You take out your flick knife and within seconds you have broken the field that keeps the shackle locked and all the girls are freed. You glance up and down at their lack of clothing.

'Good thing it's hot as hell in this place, as you wouldn't get very far if this was an Ice World.'

'We would sell better wearing this stuff,' answers your sister. 'So says the Sovereigness.'

'You've seen her?'

'Yeah, some kinda dominatrix bitch.'

'We've met.'

'Did you kill her?'

'No.'

Your sister frowns. 'Why the hell not?'

'Wasn't exactly the right opportunity to end her reign without giving me a headache on how to reach you lot. Anyway, everyone else involved in getting you guys here to this Slave Mart is dead.' You slip the flick knife back into your pocket and grip your blaster tightly in your right hand. 'Right, ladies. Time to get the—'

UNAUTHORISED DEACTIVATION OF A HOLDING FIELD IN DETENTION CELL 1138, a female voice booms from a nearby com-system. SECURITY DETAIL BETA TO DETENTION CELL 1138

'That would be this cell,' you mutter as you herd the girls out of the holding room and into the corridor. 'Run, ladies, run.' You yell as you lead the dancing troupe of five along the corridor to the door marked 'E14'. As the door slides open you hope you can get away before the security detail arrives. Turn to **167**.

50

Walking through the exit you emerge into a busy side street bustling with pedestrians. Due to the unique nature of Aquatine's orbit, the starlit night sky is still visible and the streets are artificially illuminated. You quickly spot the suburban street plan you need to consult located on a signpost opposite the docking bay exit. You walk briskly over to it and study it carefully. You trace your finger across the map and stop at the nearest police booth; it's located about six blocks away on foot. You also spot the nearest monorail station, which you need to visit in order to travel to the district of Aqua Polis your old friend works in.

Do you want to visit the nearest police booth (turn to **99**), or head immediately to the closest monorail station (turn to **111**)?

51

With a resounding clang, the *Starhunt* collides with the piece of space junk causing an almighty jolt in the cockpit. The ship suffers 3 points of damage to its HULL INTEGRITY. Turn to **66**.

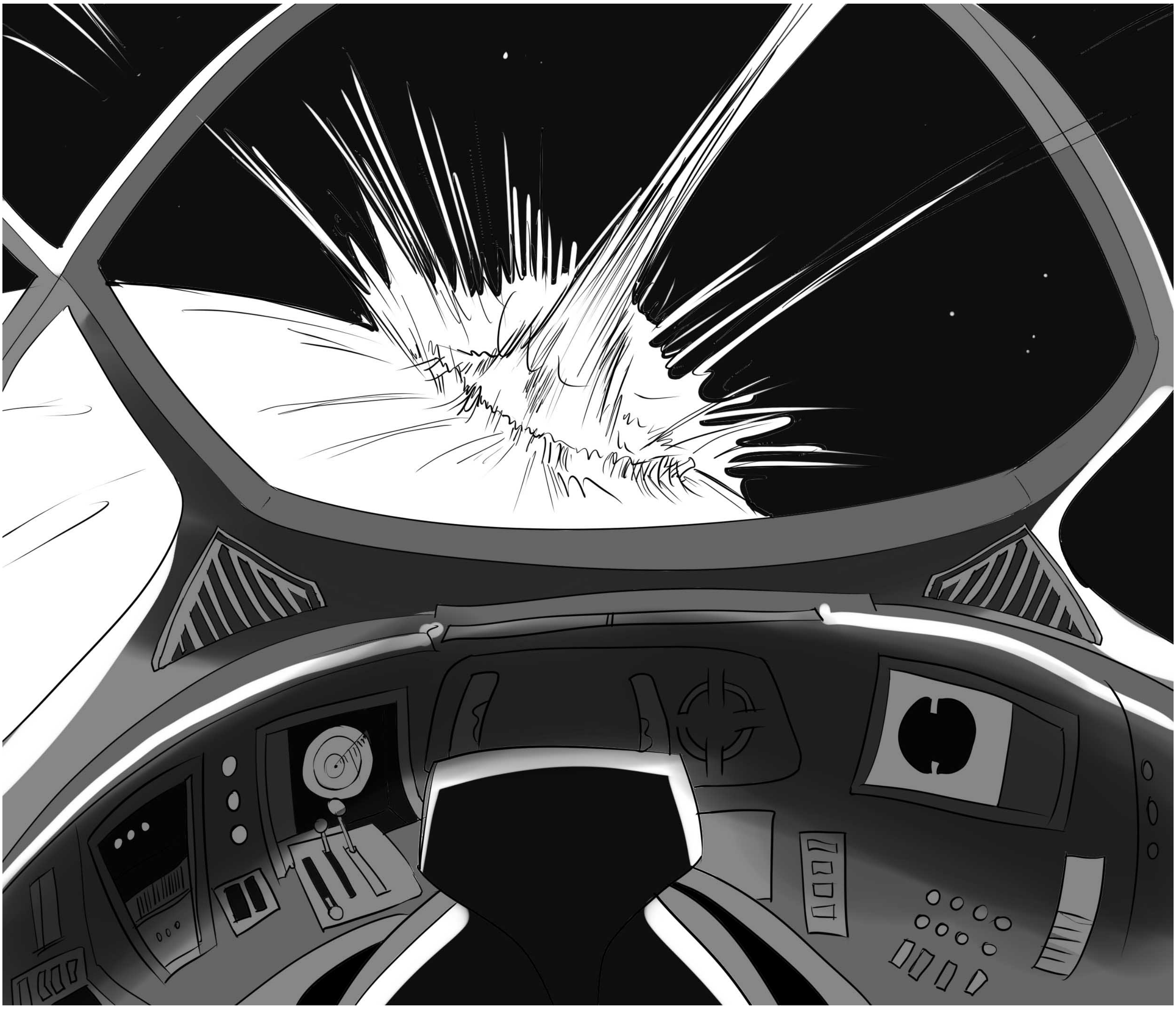
52

You see a metal doorframe sticking out of the rock face of the volcano about seven metres to your right. It's an access tunnel of some kind. Maybe even an emergency exit. You quickly walk over to it, blaster drawn, and discover that there isn't even a door. You can see straight inside and it is a corridor illuminated by low-key lighting that curves off to the right. With no time to lose, you head into the corridor. Turn to **174**.

53

Starport Omega looms ahead menacingly beyond the cockpit's viewport as the *Starhunt* emerges from warp-space. As usual you set the navi-computer to autopilot for the pre-coordinated docking sequence required by all starports. You look at the information flashing on the small monitor on the dashboard by your hands. It reads:

> *Starport: Omega – Run by Governor Maximus P. Ramos, it is the port of call for all traders and merchants who wish to ply their trade in the Outlying Territories.*
> *Type: Refuelling depot and R-and-R hotspot for spacefarers.*
> *Population: 25,000 (workers) visitor capacity 50,000*
> *Armaments: 12 Twin-Linked Plasma Cannons Batteries/ 4 Ion Cannon*



Batteries/ 3 Squadrons of Mark IIA Scorpion Interceptors (15 ships in total)

It does not take long for you to dock with the starport and you are soon onboard, ready to begin a search for Bo Collo. Unfortunately, you have no idea where to begin looking. Although you are certain the Slaver is here somewhere, you have no leads as to where to start looking and it would be futile to ask around as the chances that he would be alerted to your enquiries by a friend would almost be a dead cert. The chance to rescue your sister is tantalizingly close at hand, but it soon becomes apparent that your adventure must end here in heartbreak.

54

A look of satisfaction crosses your face as you watch Mosa's ship list heavily and then collide with a large asteroid. The spectacular explosion that marks the end of *The Siren's Fury* violently buffets the *Starhunt* and you must aggressively handle the controls to keep your ship from spinning out of control. You never got to meet Mosa, but her days of slaving are over. Then it hits you. You didn't really want to kill her as it would have been good to learn more about Bo Collo or even the location of the Slave Mart your sister will be sold at.

'Damn,' you exclaim and slam both your fists down on your console, having regained control of the ship. 'The bitch is dead, but we needed her alive to find out more about Collo or even the Void co-ordinates of the Slave Mart.'

'Do not worry, Captain,' answers Kraven-8 in a tone suggesting that if an I-Bot could smile, he would be smiling right now.

'What've you got?'

'During combat, *The Siren's Fury* attempted to send a coded transmission to Starport Omega.'

'Really?'

'Affirmative. I intercepted the message, but gave them the impression that Omega had received the transmission.'

'Show me.'

'It is coded.'

You look at the monitor in front of you and Kraven-8 sends the intercepted transmission to your screen, which appears as nothing but gibberish.

'Can you crack the code?'

'That may take some time. I have already run it through a database of codes we have without success. I believe it is in a language unique to Slavers.'

'So it's not much good to us, then?'

'There is one useful piece of information from the transmission.'

'Yeah?'

'The location the transmission was being sent to.'

Omega LD-BETAXVI. Those words appear on the monitor in front of you. 'I guess that'll be either a private suite or possibly a communications booth?'

'When we reach Omega all you will have to do is put that address into the starport's mainframe and it will give the exact location.'

'Excellent. This was surely a message for Collo because we know he's there on Omega. I don't think it matters if we know what this says or not. If it was likely some kind of warning... you didn't allow it to reach Omega so we'll still have the element of surprise to catch Collo on Omega.'

Your hands punch in some commands to the *Starhunt*'s navi-computer and the ship spins around to head back out of the asteroid field. 'Set a star-drive course for Omega.'

'Calculations have already been inputted.'

'Excellent. Next stop, Omega.'

Turn to **27**.

55

You deactivate the decompression sequence and a few minutes later you allow Collo to step out of the airlock. As he emerges you have your guard down and Collo strikes with an agility surprising for his age. You feel a stab in your left shoulder and then an agonizing burning pain sweeps through your body, sending you to the floor. As you writhe in agony, blood starts to flow from every orifice of your body. The last thing you hear before your body surrenders to death is Collo's laughter and his comment, 'That blade was coated in venom from an Argivian black viper.'

Your adventure is over.

56

You turn around to see an Armoured Centi-crab rising out of the open manhole cover and scuttling towards you. Half centipede, half crab, at least ten metres long and about the size of a pig, the creature is a male and senses you as a rival in his quest to find a mate. His pincers snap angrily at you as you draw your only means of self-defence – your knife. Unfortunately, in order to use your knife you're going to have to let the Centi-crab get very, very close. As the pincers start to snap towards your neck and shoulders it suddenly hits you as to why there were fishhooks on the wall in the control room. To jab at these creatures from a distance! Your knife is not going to save your life. Your adventure ends here.

57

Purple blood oozes from the creature's belly as your final blow kills it. You don't even think about checking out its body and instead run over to the door to leave the room. You find yourself stepping out onto another ledge pathway at an 'L' junction of flowing filth. You can still head in the direction of the hangar that you saw on the schematic and so you continue on your way as quick as you can. Turn to **202**.

58

You successfully avoid a collision with an asteroid about half the size of your ship. Turn to **34**.

59

You enter the office, which compared to the living quarters is rather sparse. A small computer console sits on top of a desk that has several polystyrene cups of coffee on it and some sheets of paper scattered here and there.

If you want to check the computer console, turn to **116**; if you wish to look at the items on the desk, turn to **46**.

60

It does not take long for you to reconnect with some old contacts and within half an hour you have been set up in a back room to meet with an ISRFA representative. As you sip at the cocktail that was provided on the house, the curtain that acts as a door moves and a short, white man sporting a purple mohawk hairstyle enters.

'So you wanna be a fighter, eh?' He does not take a seat and he jabs a finger towards you. 'Just 'cos you seem to know people round here, doesn't mean shit to me. Why do you wanna fight?'

His abrupt nature catches you slightly off guard. Do you tell him the truth about the Void Slavers and your sister (turn to **76**), or make up a story (turn to **26**)?

61

At the end of the alley you emerge into a small, enclosed square. There is a large manhole cover in the centre with a wheeled handle on it. You walk over to Gate 79, spin the wheel and pull open the manhole cover. There is a ladder, illuminated by dim blue lighting emanating from below, which leads down about six metres into a corridor. You're about to make your descent when you remember you're heading beneath the surface. Perhaps communication with the *Starhunt* will be problematic?

'Kay-8,' you announce as you contact your ship.

'Captain?'

'I'm at Gate 79–'

'I know.' Kraven-8 is monitoring your position from the cockpit of the *Starhunt* via your earpiece's spatial-locator.

'Okay, well I'm about to enter Under-Aqua. Do you think it'll affect our communication?'

'Yes, it will,' confirms your co-pilot. 'Data I accessed from the mainframe shows that it is impossible to communicate to the surface from Under-Aqua.'

'I see. Well, Arthur says I should be able to learn something here with a little investigation. However, if you don't hear from me within the hour...'

'Alert the necessary authorities.'

'And pray they don't need a body bag for me.'

'Pray to whom?'

'Jeez, Kay-8 I don't know. The Astro-tech nerd that put you together?' You sign off and realize that despite all this time together, your I-Bot will never develop a sense of humour. You take a deep sigh and climb down the ladder into Under-Aqua, pulling the manhole cover shut behind you. Turn to **91**.

62

'Take this, Slaver,' you mutter as you whack the back of his head with an ivory statuette of a baboon. The blow renders Collo senseless and he drops to the floor like a stone.

You look around the suite and notice that there is no computer terminal present. Four doors lead out of the living quarters. You head to the first, which slides open to reveal the bathroom. The second door reveals Collo's sleeping chambers and the third door parts to reveal an airlock. It would appear a ship could dock with Suite 16. The fourth door leads to a small office. Turn to **59**.

63

As Cassidy walks away, you carefully raise the grille enough for you to creep out and you immediately head off after the police officer. She is making her way out of the hangar through a set of double doors as you duck and weave behind the crates and barrels that dot the jetties that make up the hangar quay. She doesn't turn her head once and so you guess she hasn't spotted you. As the doors close behind her, you increase your speed as you don't want her to get away. Rushing through the doors you must *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **95**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **31**.

64

You walk over to the whimpering form of Ms. Huang as you stick the knife back in your pocket and pull her roughly to her feet. She screams in pain as her shattered right knee is repeatedly jarred. You pull her towards the edge of the sandpit and both of you look down. Your blaster is nowhere to be seen.

'Now, I know you knew that dog was in there so either you're going to answer my following question or you're going to play "find the blaster in the sandpit"– understand?'

The woman groans a reply that sounds like she agrees to your demands.

'Where is Lixor Tarak?'

'The last place to pick up merchandise, before the Mart, is somewhere within the Knacyletzl Hulk Yard. I don't know the exact co-ordinates.'

'What does he fly?'

The woman doesn't seem to want to answer so you loosen your grip on her a bit.

'Don't drop me,' she gasps. 'His ship's called *The Mighty Tarak* and it's a refitted Weland-Bergstein Annihilator Class Destroyer Escort.'

'Refitted with more storage space, I'll bet.' Just as you're about to return Ms Huang to the floor, you suddenly spot her hand trying to reach for the knife in your pocket. You give her a slap across the face that sends her into the sandpit, where she lands with a loud thump.

She doesn't have long to scream before a brown tentacled blob shoots out of the sand and attaches itself to her face. As her body starts to convulse, you decide not to watch the feeding habits of the Sand Octopus.

'Kay-8,' you announce into your earpiece.

'Captain?'

'Return to the rooftop to pick me up and calculate a jump to the Knacyletzl Hulk Yard.'

'Affirmative.'

Turn to **90**.

65

Waiting a few minutes until you are sure the coast is clear you slowly raise the grill and climb out into the hangar quay. You are alone apart from some sea skiffs bobbing up and down on the water that surrounds the jetties that make up the hangar. The quickest way to contact the *Starhunt* would be to get out to sea. You jump on the nearest skiff and start up its engine. You then steer away from the jetty and head along a tunnel illuminated by orange neon lights. Within a few minutes the skiff emerges out into the ocean that surrounds Aqua Polis. You contact your co-pilot and request an immediate evacuation.

'Local authorities will not take too kindly to a ship leaving its docking bay sans the captain and flying–'

'Get here quickly, Kay-8' you shout back. 'Our next port of call is Omega.'

Turn to **141**.

66

As the *Starhunt* weaves around the debris of the hulk yard it banks hard to the left to avoid a pirouetting piece of jetsam before its trajectory brings it before a huge Bulk Cruiser hulk that is about ten times the size of your ship. The *Starhunt* scans it and on the small monitor before you the following information flashes: *Mumbai Class Bulk Cruiser: Designation MCBC120156* RAMA'S CHARIOT.

'Now that's what I'd call a hulk,' you mutter under your breath.

Without warning, the alert klaxon sounds. You must *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **128**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **117**.

67

'My younger sister was among the dancing girls they took, and I'm here to track them down so I can get her back.'

'Oh my goodness,' retorts Officer Cassidy. 'You must be beside yourself with worry.'

'You have no idea.'

'And you must get all the help you need.'

'That's why I came here.'

'And it's a good thing you did too,' Cassidy breaks into another toothy smile. 'I know that some of my colleagues have managed to get a hold of one of the scum who was part of the raid. They're interrogating him now. If you want to wait out the back you can have a coffee while I give a call to Control and find out what they've learnt.'

You agree to the police officer's terms and follow her through to the back room. Turn to **45**.

68

You move along the gangway for quite some time when all of a sudden you reach a bulk-door. You activate the opening mechanism and walk through the door. You enter a room with an open manhole cover in it. On the wall there is a cabinet unit containing SCUBA equipment and a hook rack with various tools hanging from it. You surmise that this is where maintenance teams get ready to fix things under water. Your eyes also spot the poster on the wall next to the bulk-door on the other side of the room that you will leave through. The poster reads 'Warning: Centi-crab Breeding Season'. As you're about to reach the bulk-door, you suddenly hear a clickty-click-click-click noise behind you. Did you pick up a fishhook? If you did, turn to **87**. If you did not, turn to **56**.

69

A blaster bolt strikes your left shoulder! Lose 4 STAMINA points and 1 SKILL point. With your right hand you instinctively fire off a blaster shot in the direction you feel the impacting shot came from. Turn to **159**.

70

You reach out and shake Arthur's hand. 'Thanks for your help – I knew I could rely on you.'

'What are friends for, eh?' Arthur grins back as he releases your hand. 'Like I said, I'll make a few personal enquiries and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.'

As you stand up, you nod your head. 'Contact the *Starhunt* if need be.'

'Still the same frequency?'

'Yes.'

'Be careful. Void Slavers aren't known for their manners. They blast first and ask questions later.'

'You know me, Arthur. Careful is my middle name.'

You pat your old friend's shoulder and head towards the club's exit. Turn to **103**.

71

With all three Inferno Fighters destroyed there is nothing to stop the *Starhunt* from approaching the fourteenth moon.

'Scanning the moon,' announces Kraven-8.

'Good, good. What've we got?'

'I'm able to detect a small moon base comprised of a main building and three outer complexes located on top of a plateau close to cloud level. Unfortunately it's using some form of alternating shield frequency so I'm unable to establish any signs of life or detect any weapons.'

'Can we call them?'

'Affirmative, I have connected to the communication relay signal that the base is emitting.'

'Okay, let's parley.' You flick a switch in front of your right hand and then announce yourself to the moon base below. 'This is the captain of the stellar freighter *Starhunt*. I'm on the lookout for a group of young ladies who were illegally taken from Aquatine and apparently are going to be sold as slaves to line the pockets of messers Collo, Mosa and Tarak.'

You receive no reply. 'Mr. Collo won't be returning in this lifetime and neither for that matter will Rhea Mosa. And if you're down there, Lixor Tarak, I'm gunning for you next.'

Still only static answers you.

'Power surge detected,' interrupts Kraven-8. 'I believe it's an Into-Orbit Ballistic Missile.'

'An IOBM. How antiquated,' you whistle as you program the weapons system to target the approaching missile and blast it before it even leaves orbit.

'You'll have to do better than that,' you shout over the com-system. At the same time, you fire your weapons at the source of the IOBM launch. Far below there is an angry explosion that destroys a small complex located close to the main building.

'Let us hope they did not keep their prisoners there.'

You give a look to Kraven-8 and flick off the com-system. 'Is that your attempt at a joke?'

Your co-pilot does not answer immediately. 'I was merely stating a possibility.'

'Hmm, well don't.' Your fingers program in a course to take the *Starhunt* down to the moon base. 'Conversation hasn't worked, so it's time for more direct action.'

Turn to **97**.

72

You reach the bottom of the ladder rungs and you key in the code to secure the airlock door behind you. You glance around docking bay ninety-four and can see that a few other freight ships and a space yacht have parked here. The space yacht is called *The Eye of Orion* and looks to be the latest model from the Galactic Mercedes-Royce Company. One day you imagine you'll retire from your line of work and travel the stars in one of their space yachts. Back to the present, you head over to the exit doors to be confronted at the customs gate by a counter manned by a Bureaucracy Model I-Bot who greets you pleasantly.

'Welcome to Aqua Polis, the dream destination of over ten million tourists a month. You are moments away from entering the city in which you will find relaxation and pleasure in many forms. The only limit is your imagination. City police make only one request: please deposit all forms of hand blaster in the tray provided and take the receipt for the tray with you. You may retrieve your belongings on your departure.'

You sigh deeply and look from the I-Bot to the plastic tray its left hand is pointing at. 'So Aqua Polis is a blaster-free city?'

'Yes. Mayor Del Porto has zero tolerance towards blaster-related violence.'

'What about flick knives?' you pull out your knife and show it to the automated customs agent.

'You may keep it,' answered the I-Bot. 'However, please be aware that the city police do carry blasters so if you commit a crime with that weapon the consequences could be very severe.'

'Got it,' you reply as you put the knife back in your pocket and place your blaster in the tray. You glance at the number on the receipt before slipping it into your jacket's inner pocket. 'So how come Slavers managed to launch a successful raid here?'

The I-Bot takes a long pause before replying. 'I do not have the answer to that question.'

'Who would?'

'You could try talking to a city police officer. You can find them in booths located throughout Aqua Polis. They are there to offer aid and advice to all tourists, as well as protect and serve the general public.'

'Okay, thanks,' you say to the I-Bot as you walk towards the door marked 'Exit'.

'Enjoy your stay,' it replies.

On your *Adventure Sheet* make a note that you have a flick knife and earpiece and then turn to **50**.

73

The Knacyletzl Hulk Yard appears in the cockpit's viewport as the *Starhunt* emerges into real-space. You glance at the information on the small monitor by your hands. It reads:

Hulk Yard: Knacyletzl – Run by Galactic Harmony Industries, it is the final resting place for all bulk, freight and merchant class cruisers, as well as retired starships and obsolete frigates.
Type: Junk yard and spare-parts depot.
Population: Unknown
Armaments: No known weapons/
Unknown number of Waystar Corporation Security Class Mark IIIB Stellar Tugs.

'Tarak flies a Weland-Bergstein Annihilator Class D.E., so let's see if we can pick up his engines on our sensors.' You key some commands into your console to activate a sensor sweep of the hulk yard. As you gaze out the viewport at the floating wrecks and machinery parts floating around you think aloud, 'It can't be too difficult to pick up an engine trail as none of these monsters have moved in a long time.'

The console bleeps. 'A Weland-Bergstein Annihilator Class Destroyer Escort has been detected,' announces Kraven-8. 'The trail is reasonably fresh. It leads further into the interior of the yard.'

'Let's follow it.' You command the navi-computer to follow the trail.

The *Starhunt* banks to the left slightly and as it manoeuvres round the fuselage of an ancient space freighter it zooms off into the interior of the hulk yard. During your flight in warp-space the *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY was restored by a maximum of 6 points. Turn to **43**.

74

As you fly the *Starhunt* back into the Knacyletzl Hulk Yard, you must suddenly manoeuvre the ship to avoid a large chunk of floating starship debris. Roll 2 dice and compare it to the *Starhunt*'s MANOEUVRABILITY rating. If the number rolled is lower than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **135**. If the number rolled is equal to or higher than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **51**.

75

'If we contact them, then they'll be here in about ninety minutes. I might need longer than that to get my sister out.' You stand up and move to the cockpit's door. 'We'll send for them when we need them.'

Make a note of the number 190, then turn to **100**.

76

'Look,' you snap back. 'My little sister was taken by Void Slavers on Aquatine and a guy named Bo Collo was involved and the same guy is hanging out in the part of the station rented by you.'

'So,' answers the mohawk man 'you wanna be a death fighter to get at this guy?'

'Yes.'

'You gonna kill him?'

'No, I'm going to ask him where my sister's at.'

'Okay,' nods the bald man. 'Wait here and I'll be back shortly.'

He disappears through the curtain. Within ten minutes you begin to suspect that he's not coming back. Perhaps it was unwise to mention Collo's name? After half an hour you know that you're not going to get access to sub-level beta. Your rescue mission ends in frustration.

77

'I can't jump that!' your sister points to the gap between the observation lounge and the *Starhunt*. 'I'm a dancer, not a long jumper!'

'You can do it,' is all you can muster in reply as encouragement. 'One jump is all it takes to get to freedom.' You grimace and take a deep breath. 'I'll go first.'

'No way!' screams one of the other dancers and she successfully leaps across the void into the *Starhunt*.

'Tania!' cries another dancer, who leaps after the first dancer aboard the ship.

You glance at your sister. 'Bit competitive these dancers, eh?'

'You have no idea,' she mutters under her breath in reply.

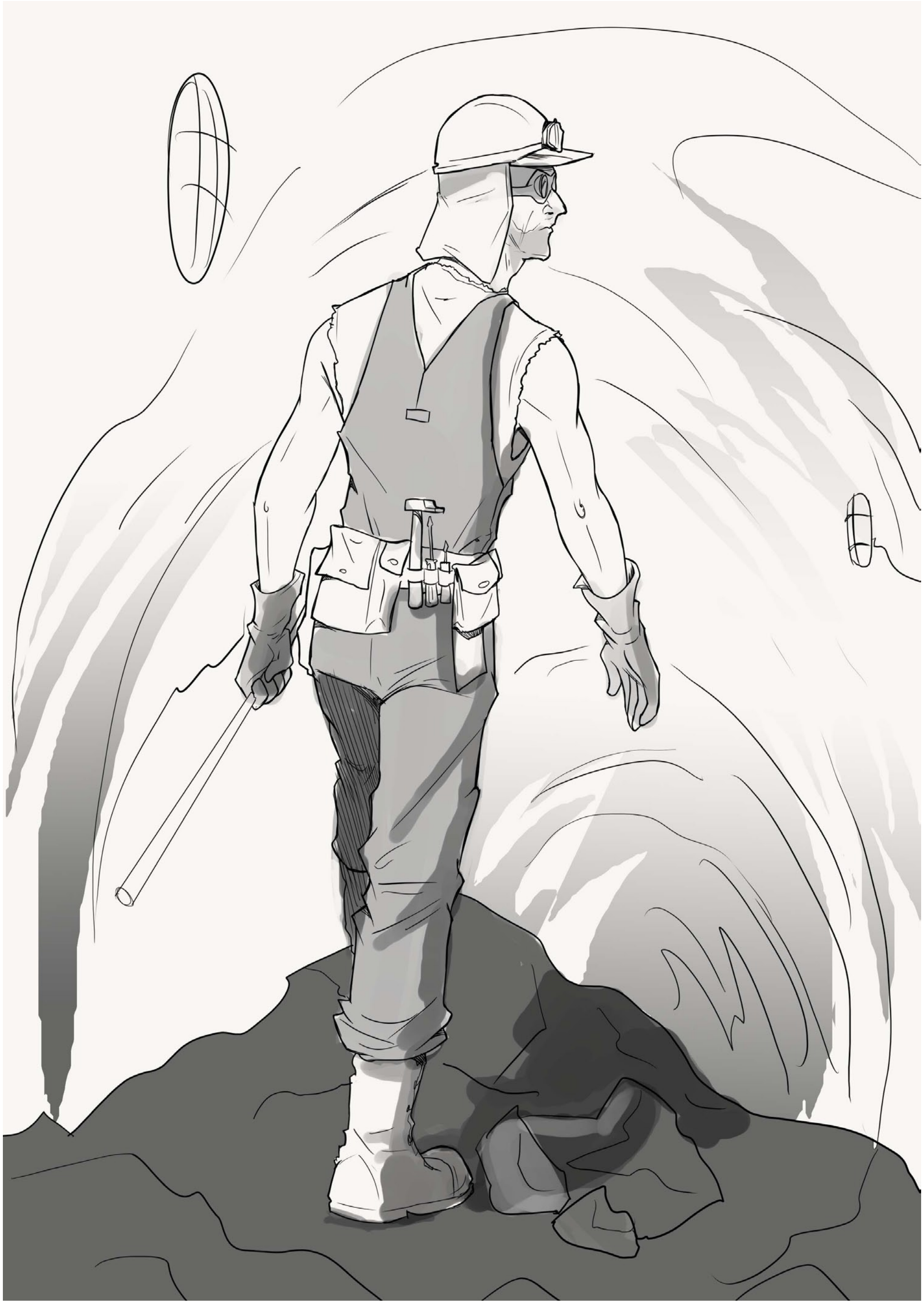
'I'm going next,' you declare, before another dancer takes a jump.

Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, you leap aboard the *Starhunt*. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, you plunge to your death and your adventure ends here without knowing if your sister ever escaped.

If you are successful, then you must make the same roll for each of the remaining three dancers, including your sister. The two dancers have a SKILL score of 7 whilst your sister has a SKILL score of 8. You must designate your sister to be either the first or third person to jump aboard. If your sister dies then although you may have rescued some of the other dancers you have failed in your mission and your adventure ends on a depressing note. On the other hand, if your sister survives the jump, turn to **195**.

78

You let the man pass you by before you jump him. Your blow isn't strong enough to stun him and all you manage to do is knock off his hard hat. Before he shouts for help, you launch a flurry of blows against him.



WORMWOOD
MINER SKILL 6 STAMINA 9

If you fail to knock him unconscious, then your rescue mission is over and your life is forfeit. The Sovereigness decides to feed you to her Drogs, an exotic beast from Yustudu that is half canine, half lizard. If you defeat the miner, then turn to **192**.

79

You board the monorail to travel to Tranquillity Central. Boarding the train that pulls up at the platform you hope that Arthur's sources, shady as they may be, are reliable. You have to change trains twice to reach your destination. It takes about half an hour to reach it.

As you leave Tranquillity Central you notice that you are in a run-down part of the city. The buildings are in a poor state of repair and one or two seem derelict. After a few minutes looking for a signpost, you see the one that points to Gate 79. As you walk along the alley that leads to it, suddenly two shambling figures loom in front of you. Turn to **171**.

80

As the bulk-door closes behind you, you find yourself on a ladder ring leading down to a metallic gangway that has several thick-set pipes running along either side of it. The pipes run down from the surface and head off in the direction you need to go. The sound of the rushing water inside the pipes resonates with a low humming noise. Without a second thought you start walking briskly along the gangway. Turn to **68**.

81

You are choking to death, but luckily you had the sense to pick up a re-breather. You fumble with it frantically before getting it in place on your head. That was close. A few seconds longer and you would have died. You decide not to inspect the vats too closely and instead head over to the door that leads out of the room. You open the door and pass through into another room. Turn to **130**.

82

Within a short time you find yourself standing outside the starport bar. Just as you're about to walk in, two Omega security guards, dragging a heavy-set Latino man, emerge and barge past you. Their prisoner appears to be unconscious, but the cause of that state remains undetermined, though the brutality of the Omega security guards is well known. You make nothing of their abrupt behaviour towards you and enter Jiflakoes. Turn to **60**.

83

Rounding the corner from the staircase you suddenly find yourself almost face-to-face with an I-Bot Defensive Sentry. The I-Bot Defensive Sentry is Hopper Industries' celebrated 'guard dog'. The I-Bot DS is a mobile weapons platform.

'Intruder alert!' the I-Bot DS intones robotically. 'Intruder alert!'

You will have to engage the I-Bot DS in Blaster Combat.

I-BOT DEFENSIVE
SENTRY SKILL 4 STAMINA 10
BLASTER SKILL 9

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **204** to resolve this combat. If you defeat the I-Bot DS, turn to **145**.

84

'By the way,' you suddenly remember, 'Mosa's contact in Aqua Polis was a police officer named Cassidy.'

'I see,' replies Arthur, 'should I contact the relevant authorities as an anonymous caller?'

'Yeah, I ran into her at the police booth nearest docking bay ninety-four.'

'Noted.'

Now turn to **35**.

85

'Two and a half kilometres from the facility,' Kraven-8 announces into your earpiece.

'Tell me when we hit two kilometres,' you reply, 'and switch to a more secure frequency.'

There is a short pause before you hear in your ear a click indicating a change in the frequency and then the voice of your co-pilot informs, 'Two kilometres.'

You jump. Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **169**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to 142.

86

On entering Suite 16, you immediately see that Collo likes to surround himself with opulence, as the living quarters are bedecked with all manner of fine art and exotic sculptures from every corner of the galaxy.

'Selling your household bits and bobs must pay well!' you exclaim as you marvel at the suite's contents, knowing that really it is the slave trade that funds his collection.

'I look for bargains when I can,' replies Collo as he heads towards a large oak desk.

With his back facing you, you know that now's the time to strike. If you want to physically jump the Slaver, turn to **36**. If you'd rather strike him over the head with a heavy object, turn to **62**.

87

You turn around to see an Armoured Centi-Crab rising out of the open manhole cover and scuttling towards you. Half centipede, half crab, at least ten metres long and about the size of a pig, the creature is a male and senses you as a rival in his quest to find a mate. His pincers snap angrily at you as you extend the fishhook outwards with both hands, ready to defend yourself.

ARMOURED
CENTI-CRAB SKILL 12 STAMINA 20

The creature's carapace armour is too thick to really penetrate effectively so each successful blow you make will only cause 1 point of STAMINA damage. If you can reduce the Centi-Crab to 16 STAMINA points or less after 7 rounds or less of combat, turn to **127**. If you fail to reach that target then turn to **110**.

88

You draw your blaster in a split second and fire at the Limpet Mine. Your shot is successful and your blast obliterates the device before it can explode. A close call, for at the level it had been placed at the resulting explosion would have likely taken off your head. You run over the walkway that spans a river of flowing lava some ten metres below it and continue on your way. Turn to **139**.

89

Moving around the hustling commuters you make your way to the platforms. You need to catch a train to your next port of call. If you want to follow the information given by Officer Cassidy, turn to the paragraph of the gate number she told you. If you haven't spoken to Officer Cassidy or you would rather follow the information given to you by your old friend Arthur, then turn to the paragraph of the gate number he gave you.

90

Within a quarter of an hour the *Starhunt* is accelerating out of the moon's atmosphere and into orbit.

'Co-ordinates to the Knacyletzl Hulk Yard are programmed into the navi-computer,' Kraven-8 informs you.

'Good, good. Let's get going.'

As soon as the *Starhunt* is clear of the moon's gravitational pull you activate the star-drive and the ship disappears into warp-space. Turn to **73**.

91

At the bottom of the ladder you find yourself in a corridor that leads in just one direction. Along both sides of the corridor are pale-blue low-energy lamps that offer enough light to see the way ahead, but not enough for you focus on too much detail. You try to raise the *Starhunt*, but accept that you can't get a signal from your present location. You follow the corridor in a straight line for about two hundred metres, reaching a heavy-set bulk-door. There is a pad on the wall with a flashing yellow handprint on it. You have no choice but to place your hand on the print, but surprisingly, the door opens without anything untoward occurring. Turn to **120**.

92

You react too late and watch in horror as your sister is ejected from the *Starhunt*. Stunned by what you have witnessed, you fail to notice the Sovereigness appear by your side. With a strength belying her small stature, she twists your neck to an unnatural angle. Your corpse follows your sister out of the *Starhunt*. Your adventure is over.

93

You decide to let her go. You can contact Arthur and let the authorities catch up with her. Waiting a few minutes until you are sure the coast is clear you slowly raise the grille and climb out into the hangar quay. You are alone apart from some sea skiffs bobbing up and down on the water that surrounds the jetties that make up the hangar. The quickest way to contact the *Starhunt* would be to get out to sea. You jump on the nearest skiff and start up its engine. You then chug away from the jetty and head along a tunnel illuminated by orange neon lights. Within a few minutes the skiff emerges out into the ocean that surrounds Aqua Polis. You contact

Kraven-8 and request an immediate evacuation.

'Local authorities will not take too kindly to a ship leaving its docking bay sans the captain and flying–'

'Get here quickly, Kay-8' you shout back. 'Our next port of call is Omega.'

Turn to **141**.

94

As you move to the right of the promontory, you use your hands to grip the rock as you follow the edge. Within a few minutes, with just a few scrapes to your hands, you have successfully rounded the obstacle. Unfortunately, that was the easy part of this route. You find yourself standing on one side of a crevice that cuts the ground in two. The crevice is about three metres wide, but it's not the width that worries you. A blast of hot air swirls up from the crevice and as you peer over the edge, you can see that about ten metres beneath the surface there flows a river of lava. There is no time to head back the way you came so you're going to have to leap the crevice.

Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **180**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to **24**.

95

You sense movement to your right and side-step just in time to avoid the handle of Officer Cassidy's blaster, which was aiming for your head. Your right elbow connects with her solar plexus and she gasps for air. Her blaster slips to the floor and you kick it aside as the two of you grapple at each other's throats. As the two of you stagger around the gantry you find yourself upon, you are both oblivious to the fact that you are fighting above a large container of churning seawater, which has a pipe that sends it to the desalination plant for conversion into drinking water. Officer Cassidy is putting up a good fight.

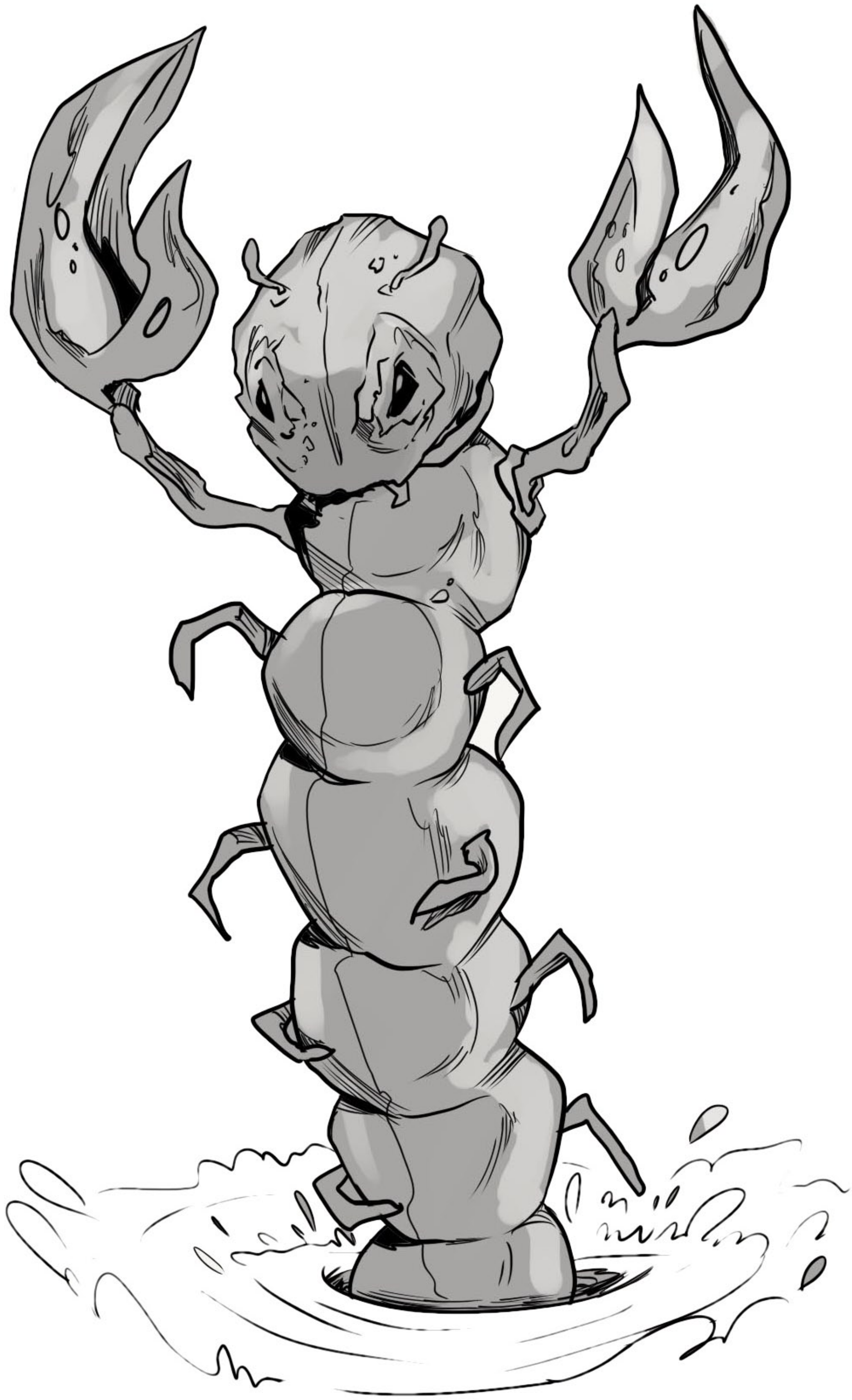
OFFICER CASSIDY	SKILL 10	STAMINA 14

If you can reduce Officer Cassidy's STAMINA to 8 points in five rounds or less of unarmed combat, turn to **3**. If you cannot reduce Officer Cassidy's STAMINA to 8 points in five rounds of unarmed combat, turn to **175**.

96

As you watch *The Mighty Tarak* rip itself apart with a series of violent explosions a feeling of déjà vu overwhelms you.

'It's Mosa's demise all over again. We have no new leads so tell me, Kay-8. Did Tarak send out a transmission that you were able to intercept?'



'Negative.'

'Can you determine the location that the Hammer-head star-drived to?'

'The odds of successfully following the freighter are approximately seven thousand and twenty to one.'

'So... that's it then. Rescue mission over.'

'Not necessarily, Captain.'

You turn to look at your I-Bot co-pilot. 'What've you been hiding?'

'Both ships started their journey to this point from a specific location within the hulk yard.'

A smile crosses your face. 'Tell me you have that location...'

'Affirmative.'

'Excellent! What is it?'

'It would appear they had docked with a large hulk.'

'Not impossible, as long as life-support was operating. I guess they're a good place to stow prisoners awaiting the Slave Mart. Take us to it.'

The *Starhunt* spins around 180 degrees and returns at full speed into the Knacyletzl Hulk Yard. Turn to **74**.

97

As the *Starhunt* approaches the moon base, you allow your ship to slow and hover over the roof of the main building. Apart from the presence of a large satellite dish, nothing seems out of the ordinary.

'Can you get a better scan, now?' you ask Kraven-8.

'Negative.'

'Guess I'll just have to go and ask, real friendly, for the return of my sister and her dance troupe.' You undo your seatbelt and head to the cockpit's door. 'Maintain this position, Kay-8, and I'll jump down onto the rooftop for a spot of breaking and entering.'

'Affirmative.'

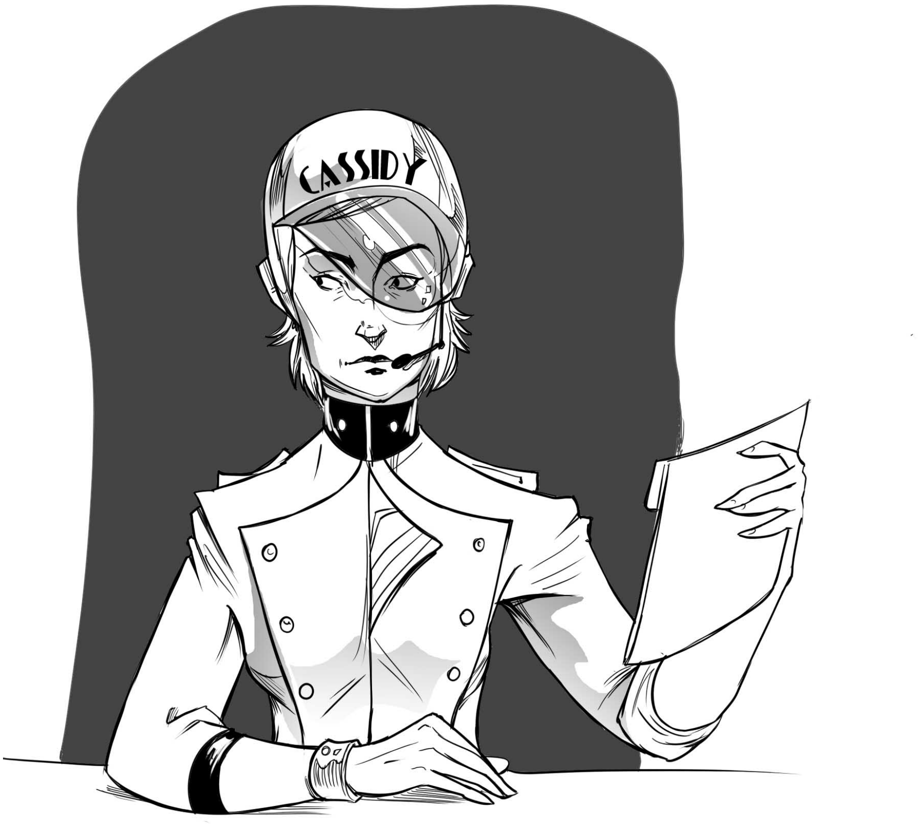
Within minutes your Astro-Tech® Corp. com-link is on your ear and a blaster has been placed into your jacket's internal holster. You wonder if Collo was able to get a communication through to this base and the slaves have been moved or if you'll be lucky and your rescue mission will end here. On your *Adventure Sheet* make a note you have an earpiece, a flick knife, an atmosphere re-breather and a blaster. If you have used any food packs since the start of your adventure, they cannot be replaced. Turn to **107**.

98

Within the ventilation system a cool breeze lowers your body temperature and you find it quite easy to crawl along at a reasonable pace. In one or two places you stop moving as you hear voices beneath you and you don't want to alert anyone to your presence. Turn to **150**.

99

You quickly head towards the police booth weaving and jostling around the pedestrians who are lost in their own early-morning thoughts. You spot the police booth in-between a tanning salon and a sandwich bar. You walk in through the automated doors, which slow your confident pace down as they creak apart very, very slowly.



'I think your doors need greasing,' you cheerfully tell the police officer you see sitting behind the desk in the confines of the booth, which appears to have a room outback. The police officer is a young, blonde woman. The name 'Cassidy' is emblazoned on her standard-issue helmet.

'Yeah,' she replies with a toothy smile. 'I've been trying to get a ME-Bot (Mechanical Engineer-Robot) to do that for weeks now. For some reason my booth's door isn't a top priority. How can I be of assistance to you today?'

'Well,' you begin as you run a hand through your hair. 'I'll cut to the chase, Officer Cassidy. What can you tell me about the Void Slaver raid that happened here in the early hours of this morning?'

Officer Cassidy's smile and pleasant manner disappears. 'I wasn't expecting you to ask about that. Why do you want to know?'

In the seconds you have to reply you have a choice to make. Do you tell her the truth that you're trying to rescue your sister (turn to **67**), or do you want to make up a cover story (turn to **123**)?

100

As you move through your ship to the docking port you stop at your quarters to pick up a jacket, your Astro-Tech® Corp. com-link and an atmosphere re-breather; it's probably not a good idea to breathe in the natural air of Wormwood.

As you reach the docking port you can feel the *Starhunt* entering its final descent and hear the landing gear extending. You open the metal locker marked 'Warning' and take out a flick knife and a blaster you took from an Eleonian Bandit a few years ago. Moments later the docking port opens and you see yourself gazing down at the rocky, brown surface of the planet. On your *Adventure Sheet* make a note that you have an earpiece, a flick knife, an atmosphere re-breather and a blaster. Turn to **85**.

101

'Let's keep moving,' you shout as you run past the bodies of the two slain men. 'Kay-8,' you say into your earpiece.

'Captain?'

'We're on the move in the bottom level of the facility somewhere in the north-east quadrant.'

'Orders?'

'Take off and use any means necessary to get over here. There's no way you're going to be able to land so we'll have to jump aboard one by one.'

'Understood.'

'You're still flying with Kraven-8?' asks your sister.

'Yup.'

You continue to race along the corridor. Turn to **126**.

102

'What the hell!' you yell at the top of your voice.

'Pulse Cannon Battery detected and I have locked our weapons onto it,' answers Kraven-8.

'Good,' you exclaim as you squeeze the trigger on your control stick. The *Starhunt* opens fire and the hulk feels the wrath of the smaller ship as blaster fire rips across its aged hull and destroys the pulse cannon battery.

'No other weapons detected,' informs Kraven-8, 'and I've scanned and located twelve humans toward the command section of the hulk.'

Seconds later the dashboard's communications system starts buzzing as a blue light flashes repeatedly above your head. 'The hulk is trying to raise us on an emergency channel,' explains Kraven-8.

'Emergency channel, eh? Put 'em through.'

'We mean you no harm,' shouts a young man. 'Our defence system was only reacting to the fact that you hadn't transmitted a security code, disabling it. We–'

'Shut up,' you snap. 'I haven't got time for meaningless banter so I'll get straight to the point. I'll ask you a question... make that two questions. An answer to either means you live. No answer to either means I'm targeting your exact location on this space wreck and pulling the trigger. Are you reading me loud and clear?'

A moments silence follows before a feeble reply crackles over the inter-comm. 'Yes.'

'Good. Now you can tell me either the destination of the Hammer-head Freighter that just left here or give me the co-ordinates of the next Slave Mart.'

Silence fills the cockpit. 'You have until the count of three,' you announce as you target the *Starhunt*'s weapons on the part of the hulk where the life readings are located. 'One.'

No reply. 'Two.'

Still no reply. A bead of sweat drips down your brow as your fingers start to press down on the ship's triggers.

'Incoming data,' says Kraven-8, suddenly. 'They are giving us co-ordinates for a planet in the Void.'

'Wormwood is the answer to both questions,' says the voice over the inter-comm. 'Now leave us be, stranger.'

'Remember,' warns Kraven-8, 'Collo alerted Tarak.'

You switch off the inter-comm. and look to your co-pilot. 'You think they'll warn the Sovereigness?'

'Affirmative.'

You look out the cockpit at the hulk. Your mind contemplates your options and you make a decision. 'Locate their communications array and lock on our weapons.'

You open the inter-comm. 'Thanks for your help,' you say as you unleash a volley of fire that eliminates their means of interstellar communication.

'Co-ordinates for the Void are inputted into the navi-computer.' Suddenly a small shuttle emerges from the front of the space hulk and as its aft thrusters ignite, it zips off deeper into the yard.

'It would appear the occupants of the hulk are fleeing,' observes Kraven-8.

'Let them. We've bigger fish to fry.'

'Affirmative.'

'Well, Kay-8,' you exhale as you program a course into the navi-computer to take the *Starhunt* out of the hulk yard. 'This is it. We've got the location of this damned Slave Mart. What could possibly go wrong?'

Having found the location of the Slave Mart, you may restore 1 LUCK point. Turn to **19**.

103

You make your way out of the club and head back towards the monorail station where you arrived. As you move through the streets you make contact with Kraven-8.

'How can I help, Captain?'

'I want you to give me some information by accessing the city's mainframe, okay?'

'What information?'

If you have spoken to Officer Cassidy, turn to **2**; otherwise turn to **28**.

104

Your hands manage to grab onto some rock that isn't loose and you're able to haul yourself up and over the edge. Without a second glance behind, you continue on over the natural arch and head towards the facility. Turn to **139**.

105

'By the way,' you suddenly remember. 'Mosa's contact in Aqua Polis was a police officer named Cassidy.'

'I see,' replies Arthur 'should I...'

'No, no, she won't be helping Void Slavers again in this lifetime.'

'I hope you didn't leave any evidence on the body.'

'I'm not sure if there'll be a body to find.'

'Ouch!'

Now turn to **35**.

106

'The Slavers that Kay-8 named are Lixor Tarak, Bo Collo and Rhea Mosa.'

'I've heard of all three. Old Bo frequented this joint a few times back in the day.'

'I thought you might have heard of 'em. That's why I looked you up.'

Arthur chuckles, 'Wasn't for my good looks now, eh? Anyway, the guy Tarak I've never seen but he's been a Slaver all his days. Began life as someone's lackey and now, forty-odd years later he's in charge of his own raiding ship. Bo Collo...'

'Was a gun-runner in the Caliban Nebula?'

Arthur nods and isn't put off by your interruption, 'Until about ten years ago when he decided upon a career change. As for Rhea Mosa, well her mother was the bounty hunter Scarlett Mosa.'

You shrug your shoulders; you've never heard of her.

'Anyway, Rhea is a bad egg. She has a real mean streak in her. Rumour has it she was the one who offed her mother. I'd put credits on it that she was behind today's raid.'

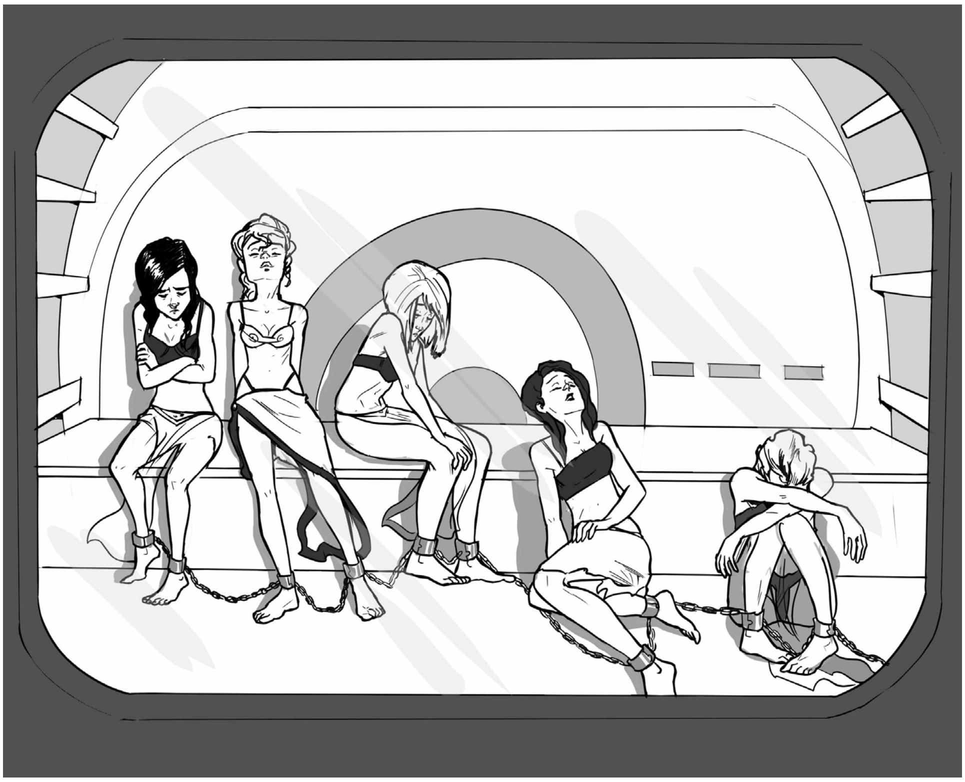
'Okay, so enlighten me on Under-Aqua, Arthur.'

Turn to **161**.

107

Given that the oxygen content on this moon is slightly thinner than your body would be accustomed to, you jump down onto the rooftop wearing an atmosphere re-breather over your mouth. As your boots make contact with the metallic surface, you crouch down and draw your blaster.

'Set down and await further orders,' you announce into your earpiece.



'Aye, Captain.'

The *Starhunt*'s thrusters power up and Kraven-8 spins the ship around to land about fifty metres from your current location.

Looking around the rooftop you spot a door in the side of a raised mall marked 'Maintenance Crew Only'. That will do as a point of entry and you quickly rush over to it in a crouched position. On reaching the door you can see that it is locked. It seems a bit of blunt force is required to get past the door. You holster your blaster and line up to ready a shoulder barge.

Breaking down the door will require you to *Test your Skill*. Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **170**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to **191**.

108

Opening the manhole cover does not reveal the overwhelming stench you were expecting. You see there is a ladder and the same dim-blue light permeates below. Closing the cover behind you, you head down the ladder and find yourself in a small room with a single door leading out. You activate the door's opening mechanism and the door slides upwards to reveal a corridor ending in another door with writing on it. You walk towards the door and see that the writing is a warning: DANGER: NOXIOUS FUMES. If you choose to continue through the sewer, turn to **6**. If you feel that it might be safer to go through the bulk-door then you can return to it and head through it; turn to **8**.

109

'Sounds like they need help,' you say quickly before adding, 'but what would a bulk cruiser be doing close to an asteroid field?'

'Insufficient evidence to–'

'Don't say it,' you snap at the I-Bot. 'Let's just go check exactly what kind of help they need.'

Moments later you take the *Starhunt* to the co-ordinates given in the message. Through the viewport you can see a bulk cruiser drifting slowly at a slight angle towards you.

'Definitely a bulk cruiser,' you say aloud. 'Let's–' Before you finish your sentence the communication system buzzes again and Kraven-8 opens the system to the confirmatory wave of your right hand.

Instead of the woman's voice there is an incredibly loud high-pitched screech. You slam your hands to your ears, but the deafening noise is so intense that within seconds you lose consciousness. Turn to **132**.

110

As you start to tire from jabbing at the monstrous brute, your guard is let down slightly. Suddenly a pincer snaps your fishhook in two! You quickly reach for your knife as the Centi-Crab lunges forward snapping at your head and shoulders. Unfortunately, your knife won't be able to save your life and so your adventure comes to a bloody end.

111

Moving rapidly through the streets you bump into two young ladies pushing a pram. You apologize profusely and keep on walking to avoid a public scene. Reaching the monorail station called Randall Lane you pass through the turnstile without having to buy a ticket, as the Aqua Polis monorail system is free for public use. You follow the crowd to the platform edge and wait for the next train to come along. As you stand twiddling your toes and trying not to make eye contact with anyone else, there is a slight buzz in your right ear and you hear the voice of Kraven-8. 'Captain, are you free to hear what I have learnt?'

'Go ahead,' you reply quietly.

Turn to **152**.

112

'Nowhere left to run,' goads the Sovereigness.

Suddenly, the whole facility rocks with a tremendous jolt and somewhere close by an explosion sounds. The Sovereigness is thrown to her knees and her laser whip slips from her grasp. As everyone else is tumbling over, you manage to keep on your feet. You take a few steps forward and kick the Sovereigness square in the jaw.

'That's for trying to sell my sister,' you yell as her body is thrown aside by the blow.

TCA PEACEKEEPERS ARE LAUNCHING A FULLSCALE ASSAULT, a female voice screams through the room's com-system.

'The cavalry,' you tell your sister knowingly, as you see the *Starhunt* appear on one side of the observation lounge.

'I advise you to duck, Captain,' you hear Kraven-8's voice through your earpiece.

'Get down, ladies,' you shout as you move back towards them and pull your sister to the floor.

The *Starhunt* opens fire and a spray of blaster fire destroys the window ports, killing several armed guards in the process. Then the *Starhunt* turns to one side and you can see that the docking port is wide open. Kraven-8 manoeuvres towards the side of the observation port, but you and the dancers are still going to have to make a jump to get aboard. Turn to **77**.

113

Without warning you are suddenly under attack from Rhea Mosa's ship, *The Siren's Fury*. Mosa will get to fire first against the *Starhunt*.

THE SIREN'S FURY	WEAPONS SYSTEM 9 DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 15 HULL INTEGRITY 18

Make a note of this paragraph and then

turn to **205** to resolve this combat. If the *Starhunt* reduces *The Siren's Fury* to HULL INTEGRITY 0, turn to **54**.

114

You find yourself in a corridor that leads directly ahead for about fifty metres. On either side you can see sets of doors spaced approximately every two metres. You walk along in the centre of the corridor and scan your head to the left and right as you pass each set of doors. You can see that each set of doors leads into a small room that contains a holding cell containing people captured by Slavers. At the eighth door on your right, you stop. You immediately recognize the face of your sister in the holding cell beyond the doors. Having successfully located your sister, you may restore 2 LUCK points. Turn to **49**.

115

Twenty minutes later and the ISRFA medical examiner gives you a clean bill of health. Orlando has you sign an insurance waiver for the one-off fight you have agreed to enter.

'You'll fight within thirty minutes,' he informs you with a grin.

'That's pretty quick,' you reply. 'Not much time to train.'

Orlando breaks into raucous laughter. 'Death fighters never train, rookie. Raw fighting is the name of the game. Raw as in just get into the ring and fight.' He leads you from the medical wing of Sub-level Beta and into a changing room and adjacent gym. He points to the gym. 'Train in there if you want, rookie. I'll be back to get you for your fight. You know as a rookie, if you win you'll get fifty thousand.'

'And if I lose?'

'Well, if you survive... you'll get a thousand credits for your effort. How much do you need to pay off your creditors?'

'About thirty-five thousand.'

Orlando laughs again. 'Well, looks like you'll have to win, then.'

'Who's my opponent?'

'Jonah Quayle – aka the Painmaster.'

'Is he good?'

'Undefeated in twenty-seven bouts.'

Turn to **147**.

116

You switch on the machine and immediately the following text appears on screen:

ENTER PASSWORD: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

'Damn,' you think to yourself. 'No way am I going to guess that in a hurry.'

You hear a shuffling noise coming from the living quarters. Maybe Collo's coming round? If you want to look at the items on the desk, turn to **17**. Otherwise you head back into the living quarters, turn to **193**.

117

You are unable to manoeuvre the *Starhunt* quickly enough and a concealed pulse cannon battery's volley impacts the ship. Take 4 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. If the *Starhunt* hasn't been blown out of space, turn to **102**.

118

You quickly spin on your heels and raise your arms as an out-of-control ME-Bot charges straight at you. 'Kill, kill, kill!' declares a robotic voice that sounds slightly psychotic. You have little time to react and immediately throw a punch its way.

CRAZED ME-BOT SKILL 7 STAMINA 7

If you manage to defeat it, you dust yourself down and walk in through the club's doors. Turn to **21**.

119

As you continue through the asteroid field, your piloting skills are put to the test. Roll 2 dice and compare it to the *Starhunt*'s MANOEUVRABILITY rating. If the number rolled is lower than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **178**. If the number rolled is equal to or higher than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, turn to **156**.

120

Stepping through the bulk-door, you enter a large room that you guess is some sort of control room. In the centre of the room is another manhole cover with a wheel-handle on it, while directly opposite from where you are standing is another bulk-door. Around the room there are several empty workstations with their monitors switched off. Located above the manhole cover is a four-sided television screen that has on each screen eight small images taken from security cameras located around this part of Under-Aqua. Curiously, on one screen, three of the eight images are blacked out. The cameras must be off. On the wall to your left is a row of re-breathers and some barbed fishhooks on metre-and-a-half poles. On the wall to your right is a schematic of the area of Under-Aqua you are situated in. Luckily for you, you are in a maintenance section. If you go through the manhole then you will enter the sewer system. If you go through the bulk-door then you will drop down a level and find yourself in amongst the network of freshwater pipes that feed this part of the city. Both directions will take you along to a room marked Hangar Quay. You think back to Arthur's comment about a pay-off that will take place. That hangar looks a good place to head to as a potential meeting place. Besides, it could be the quay that the Slavers berthed at to gain access to the city. If you want to head to the hangar through the sewer, turn to **181**. If you would rather not trudge through the city's waste, turn to **29**.

121

The Painmaster lands a flurry of blows on you; lose 4 STAMINA points and 1 SKILL point. You must now fight your opponent despite your wounds.

PAINMASTER SKILL 9 STAMINA 21

If you can reduce the Painmaster to a STAMINA score of 15 within five rounds or less of combat then turn to **22**. Otherwise the Death Fighter proves to be too strong for you and beats you unconscious. Your battered body enters a comatose state and whether or not you will awaken is of little consequence to your current rescue mission which is now over.

122

The Sovereigness is a formidable opponent. It will take all you've got to beat her in hand-to-hand combat.

SOVEREIGNESS SKILL 11 STAMINA 26

If you reduce her STAMINA to 0 or less, turn to **7**.

123

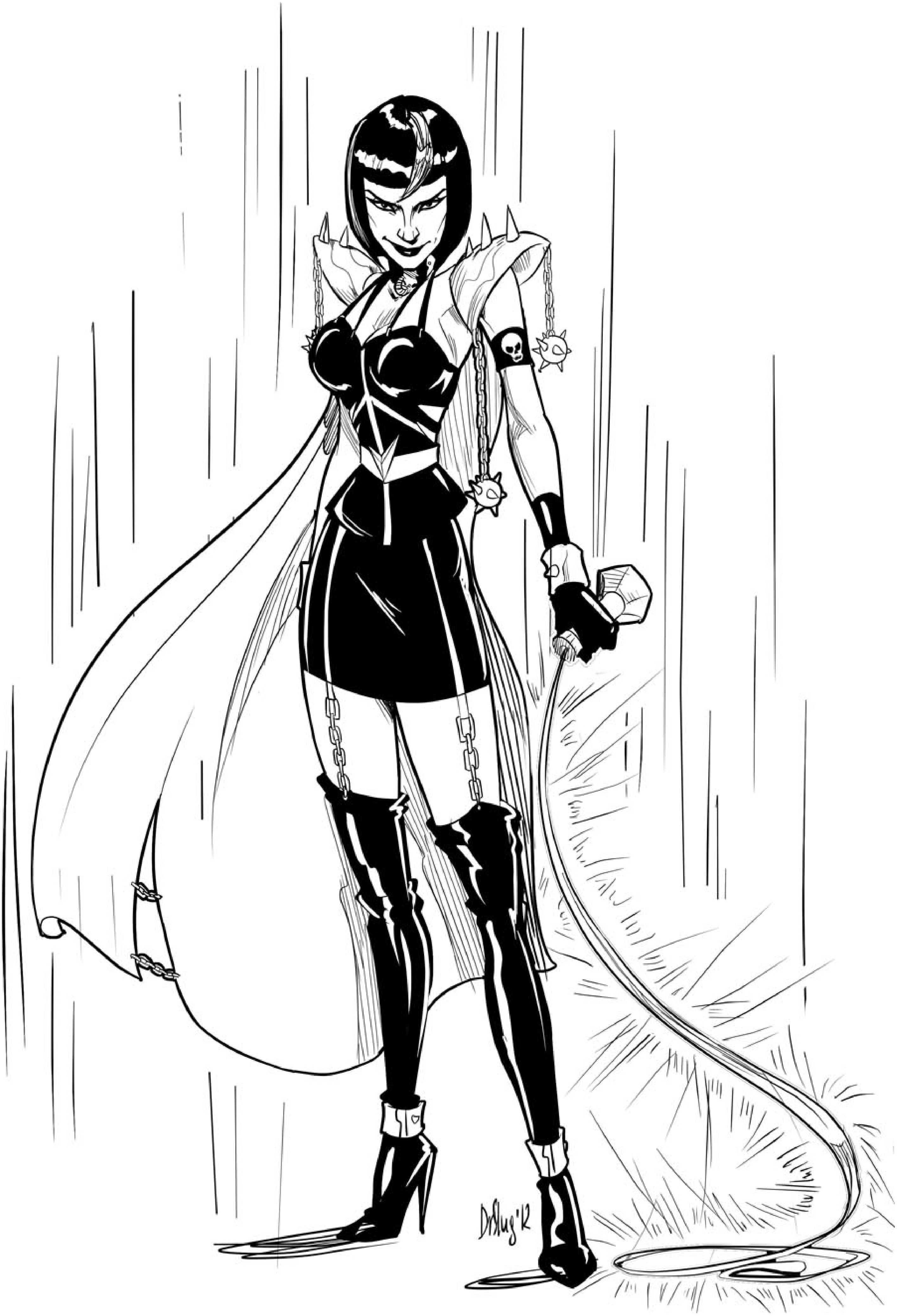
'I'm a reporter for the Interstellar Tribune,' you flash a fake ID you always carry in your jacket pocket. 'I got a tip that there was a Slaver raid here on Aqua Polis and that some dancing girls were taken.'

'Not much of a tip,' she shrugs her shoulders. 'That info's all over the stellar news networks.'

'Yes, I know. I'm here, though, because I want to know how the Slavers were able to launch a raid in the first place. After all, doesn't Aqua Polis pride itself on its security protocols?'

Officer Cassidy shifts uneasily in her chair. 'Look, I shouldn't tell you this,' she begins, 'and whatever you do don't mention me in any article, but I feel really bad for what happened to those girls. The Slavers most likely made their way through Under-Aqua, the network of tunnels that the city is built upon. I have it that Gate 13 is the Under-Aqua access point that they breached to make their raid.'

'Gate 13?'


DrSlug'12

'Yeah – and it certainly proved to be unlucky for those girls. If you want to investigate this crime, I'd start there. Be careful, though – my colleagues might be scanning the area for evidence and they won't appreciate a journalist turning up and asking questions.'

You thank Officer Cassidy for her information and bid her good morning as you decide it's time to pay a call to your old friend and head to the nearest monorail station. Make a note on your *Adventure Sheet* of the number 13 and then turn to **111**.

124

'Who knows?' you mutter under your breath as you ignore the message. 'Better divert power to the forward deflectors, Kay-8, as I feel we may be in for a—' Your message is cut short as a powerful energy beam strikes the *Starhunt*.

'Nova Beam,' you hear your co-pilot say before your ears pop as the ship's hull ruptures under the attack and depressurization occurs within the *Starhunt*.

An oxygen mask drops down in front of your face and you slip it on as you struggle with the controls of the ship. You need to pull the *Starhunt* out of the descent into the atmosphere of the planet as the hull breach means it's impossible to re-enter a planetary atmosphere.

The whole ship violently rattles as you attempt to steer the damaged ship clear of the pull of gravity. However, your attempts to beat the laws of physics are doomed and moments after you feel the cockpit starting to heat to an uncomfortable temperature, the *Starhunt* spectacularly disintegrates. Your adventure is over.

125

You have missed the start of this conversation, but you listen in and hear some interesting pieces of information.

'Now, don't worry,' says one of the men. 'When Collo reaches Omega then he'll transfer the funds to your account on Loth.'

Your mind runs over these points as you listen; Omega is a starport and the gateway to the Outlying Territories, while Loth is a small moon in the Draxis System famous for its banking code where no questions are asked.

'Rhea is sorry for the change of plans, but technical problems can and do happen – even to professionals.'

'So', you think to yourself, 'Arthur was right and Rhea Mosa had something to do with the raid that captured my sister.'

'I'm not worried,' replies a woman. 'I was just a little concerned about how I'd get paid if she was going to Naxosia.'

Naxosia is an Independent System traveller's starport whose governor sympathizes with space pirates. The last time you were there you got into a spot of trouble with a bar owner and you're probably still on the blacklist. Then it hits you who the woman's familiar voice belongs to – Officer Cassidy. She was the Slavers' connection here in Aqua Polis! No wonder she suggested you go investigate Gate 13. Your blood starts to boil, but in the confines of the ventilation shaft there is little you can do other than to continue listening in.

'To make it up,' continues a different male voice, 'she wants you to have a little up front to show how much she appreciates your help.'

You can't see, but you know that some credits are being handed to Cassidy, who answers, 'Tell her thanks a lot and I'm sure we'll do business again.'

The men bid the police officer farewell and move out of your range of hearing. You hear Cassidy call after them, 'Five minutes and the cameras will be back online.' You don't hear them answer her, but you can hear an engine revving. It'll be a sea skiff. The two men are leaving and although they might be Slavers who had something to do with the raid that took your sister, you are not too concerned about them. They are small fry compared to the bigger fish such as Mosa and Collo, who is heading to Omega. You then hear Cassidy's boots fade away as she leaves the quay. You will tell Arthur what you heard and hope the local authorities will deal with her as you better head to Omega sooner rather than later. Turn to **166**.

126

The dancing troupe follows you through a set of doors that lead into what could be called an observation lounge. The large room is full of sofas and a pool table; the whole room has a panoramic view of the outside as a series of glass windows stretch around the room.

'Nice view,' you murmur, 'but we've hit a dead end.'

''Dead' is a particularly suitable word to utter right now,' comes a voice from behind you.

You all spin around to see the Sovereigness standing in the doorway you just came through. She activates a laser whip that hisses with electrical fury as she gives it a test crack.

'I don't know who the hell you are,' she snaps, 'but no one steals from me. These bitches are mine to do as I please with and as for you... my Drogs will eat well today.'

Behind her you can see several armed men running to back up their employer. It looks as though your luck is about to run out. Check your *Adventure Sheet*; you will have written either 190 or 112. Turn to the paragraph that corresponds to the number you have.

127

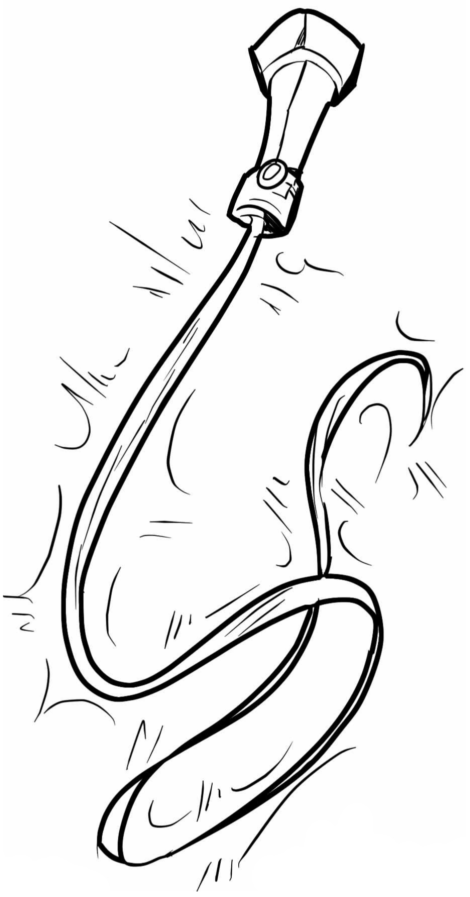
As you avoid a snapping pincer, you suddenly realize you have an opportunity to end the fight quickly. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **172**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **151**.

128

With lightning reflexes you are able to manoeuvre the *Starhunt* just in time to avoid a volley from a concealed pulse cannon battery on board the hulk. Turn to **102**.

129

'So, who's the Sovereigness? I've not heard that name. Not that I pay much attention to the activities of Void Slavers. I remember Tupak Khan being a name–'



'Someone rigged his space yacht to go off like a supernova,' interrupts Arthur, 'probably someone who was working for the Sovereigness. She's fairly new on the Slaver scene. She's replaced Khan as the head honcho of Slave Mart organization. Word has it she's the dictionary definition of the word 'bitch'.'

'What's her real name?' you ask, out of curiosity, 'seeing as I doubt her parents named her 'Sovereigness'.'

Arthur gives a half-hearted shrug of his shoulders. 'No one knows. Some say she's the estranged daughter of an aristocrat from Elsinore Five. Others swear it's the niece of the current president of the TCA, Vasquez.'

'I see. Anyway, she's the one who decides where and when the Slave Mart occurs?'

'Yup, just like Khan did before her.'

If you want to know more about the movements of Slavers after a raid, turn to **37**. If you have learnt everything you want to, turn to **70**.

130

Since you are wearing a re-breather you are blissfully ignorant of the terrible stench that emanates from the huge mass of rotting material located in the three vats set into the floor of this room. Again you decide not to inspect the vats too closely and walk briskly towards the door ahead of you. As you pass by a vat, a tentacle suddenly whips out and lashes itself around your leg. You are knocked off your feet and crash to the metallic floor. You are quick to react and use the fishhook to stab at the brown tentacle, which is about as thick as your arm. Something purple that probably passes for blood oozes out and the tentacle whips away, back into the vat. You don't have time to feel relaxed, though, as suddenly a hulking octopus-like creature pulls itself up out of the vat and shuffles towards you. Six tentacles lash out at you from the eyeless creature and its gaping maw reveals a row of sharp-looking teeth. You have a feeling that this is a Sump Monster; the fishing hook might come in handy to jab at it with.

SUMP MONSTER SKILL 10 STAMINA 14

If you defeat the creature, turn to **57**.

131

Cassidy's attempt to toss you over the edge of the gantry backfires, as you manage to turn the tables on her by breaking her left wrist. As she howls in pain you land a couple of blows to her face, for your sister's plight, before you pitch her over the gantry. You walk away as she screams for help to avoid the inexorable drag of the pipe connected to the desalination plant and head back to the hangar quay. You need to contact the *Starhunt*. On entering the hangar quay, you jump on the nearest skiff and start up its engine. If you head out to sea you will be able to use your earpiece. Moments later you steer away from the jetty and head along a tunnel illuminated by orange neon lights. Within a few minutes the skiff emerges out into the ocean that surrounds Aqua Polis. You contact Kraven-8 and request an immediate evacuation.

'Local authorities will not take too kindly to a ship leaving its docking bay sans the captain and flying—'

'Get here quickly, Kay-8,' you shout back. 'Our next port of call is Omega.'

Turn to **141**.

132

The *Quantum Echo* is a space pirate vessel and its crew believes they can now plunder the *Starhunt*. They do not know that you have an I-Bot co-pilot unaffected by the sonic blast used to incapacitate a human crew. Kraven-8 takes complete control of the *Starhunt* and fights off the approaching bulk cruiser that was faking engine problems as a lure for potential targets.

QUANTUM ECHO
WEAPONS SYSTEM 7
DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 14
HULL INTEGRITY 16

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **205** to resolve this combat. If the *Starhunt* reduces the *Quantum Echo* to HULL INTEGRITY 0, turn to **154**.

133

You reach a set of locked doors, which you calculate is at least forty metres from the position you had held when talking to Kraven-8. Using the handle butt you bang angrily on the door.

'Open up! I know you're both in there.'

Silence.

'Don't make me blast this door down!'

Still no reply. You shake your head in frustration; there's no way you can shoulder-barge this door open. You're going to have to risk it all on blasting the lock mechanism. You run your hand up and down the middle of the door and stop when you feel a slight humming in your palm.

The lock is activated at this point. You point the blaster at the spot as you pull away your hand and squeeze the trigger. The shot causes the lock mechanism to fail and as the doors slide open you must *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **179**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **69**.

134

As you clamber up the promontory, you find that this route was not as difficult as you had imagined it would be. As you scale the rocky surface you reach the summit, which arches over like a natural bridge. As you walk ahead you suddenly notice that there is a split in this natural arch and you find yourself staring down through a gap at a river of flowing lava. The gap is nothing more than about a metre and half wide. You think nothing of simply giving a quick hop across the gap. As you land on the other side, the rock beneath your feet shifts and gives way. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **104**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **187**.

135

You are able to avoid a collision with the floating space junk, which could have caused some serious damage to the *Starhunt*. Turn to **66**.

136

Your apprehension proves to be your undoing. You don't move across the grille quickly enough and it suddenly gives way under your weight. You come crashing down on top of a Drog, killing it instantly. The other Drogs are momentarily surprised by your unannounced arrival, but then instinct kicks in and you are torn to pieces. It takes some time for you to die. Your adventure is over.

137

On entering the *Starhunt* and taking your seat, you turn to look at your I-Bot co-pilot. 'Well, we're now fifty thousand credits better off.'

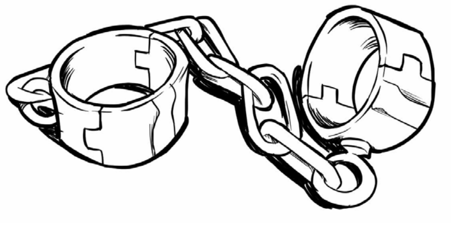
'You look awful, Captain.'

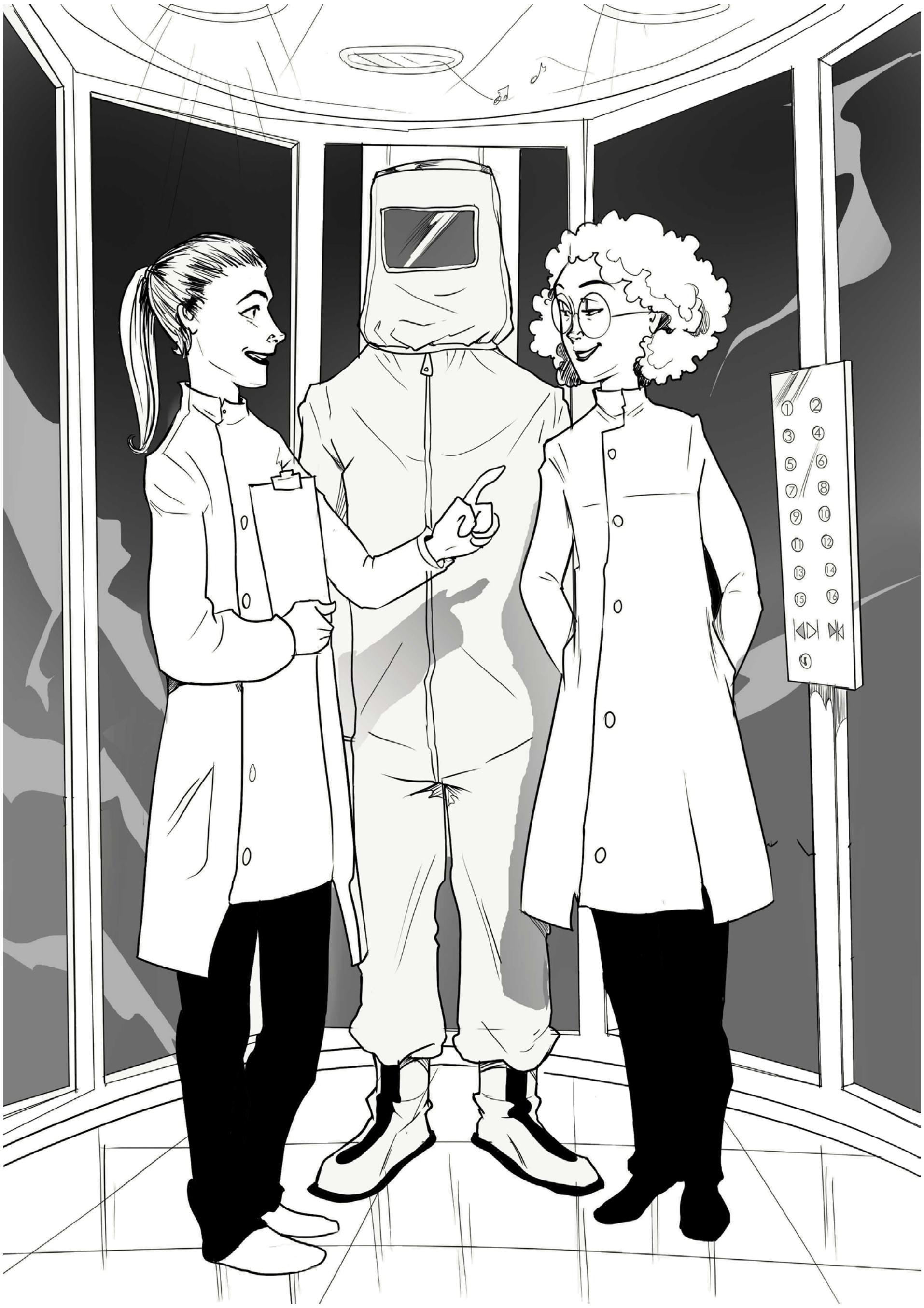
'Yeah, well I guess I look exactly as I feel. Still, we're on the right course to getting my sister back. Let's get going.'

Once the *Starhunt* is beyond Omega's security zone, you activate the star-drive and the ship disappears into warp-space, on course to Querto IV, which lies within the Outlying Systems. Whilst docked in the starport, the *Starhunt* was able to restore HULL INTEGRITY by a maximum of 10 points. Turn to **18**.

138

Having slipped on the suit and mask and put your blaster and atmosphere re-breather into a heat-resistant satchel, along with a piece of hand-held scanning





equipment, you leave the shed and walk across the cavern. You soon spot several miners coming out of a doorway that looks like the exit from an elevator system. If it goes up then it should go to the facility itself. As the miners walk past, you raise a hand as a sign of greeting and then step into the elevator. To your surprise there are two female technicians standing to one side of the elevator.

'Going down?' asks one of them as her hand hovers over the control panel. You want to go up, but given you're wearing a heat-resistant suit it must be obvious you are dressed to go deeper into the volcano. You exaggerate a nod of your head due to the heavy-set mask you are wearing.

The woman presses a button that was already illuminated, no doubt the level the two of them are heading to. 'Anyway,' says the woman who pressed the button to her colleague, 'I told her it was over, but you know Clarissa.'

'Yeah,' agrees the other woman, ''clingy' Clarissa.' She starts to laugh, but it seems slightly faked.

'Laugh it up,' snaps the button-pressing woman, 'she's threatening to kill herself if I don't take her back.'

There is a loud buzz and the doors open. You let the two women go out ahead before you feign following them out. They haven't noticed that you failed to exit the elevator and the doors close on you. Gazing at the control panel, you opt to press the top button and hope that's the place you want to reach. The elevator ascends. Turn to **188**.

139

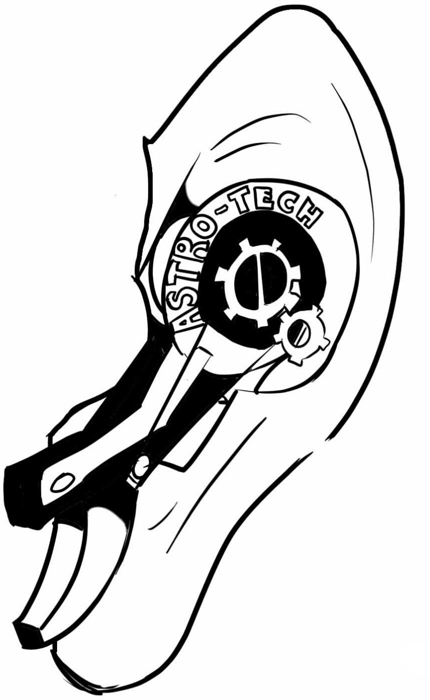
Within around half an hour you find yourself at the foot of the volcano the mining facility is built upon. The facility's foot supports are located about twenty metres above you and you can see a dirt track leading up to a vehicle entrance a little way over to your left. However, you need to find some other means of entry – and quickly. You look around the base of the volcano and suddenly you spot something that brings a smile to your face. Turn to **52**.

140

The corridor you are following reaches a junction, which leads left and right. You spot a computer terminal on the side of the wall in the left corridor and immediately head over to it. You stop at it and are relieved that there is no pass code required to access it. Within minutes you have located the makeshift detention centre and it's on the same level that you are currently on. Your joy is short-lived though, for you realize that it's on the other side of the facility and there's no way you can walk to it wearing the suit and mask you have on. You need another means of getting there. As you study the layout of the facility, it suddenly hits you; the ventilation system. If you climb through the vents, you should be able to cross the facility from one side to the other undetected. Turn to **196**.

141

Ten minutes later and the *Starhunt* suddenly appears flying overhead, hovering above the skiff. The docking port is open and you jump up and grab the lowest ladder rung. As you climb inside



your ship, Kraven-8 manoeuvres into a trajectory that will take you into orbit.

'Good timing,' you tell your co-pilot as you settle into your seat in the cockpit.

'Thank you, Captain. You should be aware that the city's security ships have been launched and will intercept us in four minutes.'

'What's Aqua Polis got?'

'Aurora Patrollers.'

'Ah, we'll be long gone before they reach us. Have you–?'

'Yes, co-ordinates to Omega have been programmed into the star-drive.'

'Excellent.'

As the *Starhunt* tears through the planet's stratosphere, there is suddenly a buzz on the dashboard's communications system as a blue light flashes repeatedly above your head. 'Another warning from the—'

'No,' interrupts Kraven-8. 'It is an incoming message from Fishnet High.'

'That'll be Arthur. Put him on,' you reply urgently.

Arthur's head and shoulders coalesce into shape from the projector of the holo-receiver and you are immediately struck by the fact that his face looks bruised and bloodied. 'Greetings, fleeing criminal,' he says with a slight chuckle. 'Unauthorized docking bay departure, eh? Whatever next?'

'Who knows?' you answer, with a shrug of your shoulders. 'What happened to your face?'

'Ah, well I made a few very persuasive enquiries after you left and I managed to learn the following: Rhea Mosa was behind today's slave raid, as I had suspected. Interestingly, her ship's developed a star-drive problem and so she had to hand over her prisoners to–'

'Collo, who's on his way or arriving at Omega as we speak.'

'Okay,' muses Arthur, 'the trip to Gate 79 paid off then? Did you learn where Mosa is repairing her ship?'

'No.'

'Aha, so at least my bruised face was not in vain,' Arthur chuckles as he rubs his chin. 'She's out in the Mardavian Asteroid Field trying to make repairs.'

'What does she fly?'

'A customized Kosmic Industries Bulk Cruiser called *The Siren's Fury*.'

'The *Starhunt* can deal with a Kosmic Cruiser,' you think aloud as you continue your reply, 'but if Collo's at Omega I might as well star-drive there. What's the point in going after Mosa when my sister's with Collo?'

'Well, my friend, the choice is up to you where you go, but it's possible you might learn something useful from Mosa if you're able to interrogate her.'

'Okay, Arthur,' you look up from the hologram to see that the *Starhunt*'s viewport now has a clear view of space. 'We're in orbit so it's almost time to leave.'

If you spoke to Officer Cassidy and killed her, turn to **105**. If you spoke to her, but didn't have the opportunity to kill her, turn to **89**. Otherwise, turn to **35**.

142

You hit the ground awkwardly and cause yourself 4 points of STAMINA damage and 1 point of SKILL and BLASTER SKILL damage. If you're still alive you stand up and dust yourself down as you watch the *Starhunt* zip away into the distance towards a massive metallic structure that hugs the side of a fairly large volcano. There's no time to lose and you immediately start to head towards the same facility. Turn to **185**.

143

Amid the spinning hulks of retired and obsolete spacecraft, the *Starhunt* engages the hostile Stellar Tug.

MARK IIIB STELLAR TUG	WEAPONS SYSTEM 10
	DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 13
	HULL INTEGRITY 14

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **205** to resolve this combat. If the *Starhunt* reduces the Stellar Tug to HULL INTEGRITY 0, turn to **30**.

144

You flick on the machine and immediately appears the following text appears on screen:
ENTER PASSWORD: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

'No time to crack that,' you mutter to yourself.

You cut your losses and head back into the living quarters. Turn to **193**.

145

Stepping over the smouldering remains of the I-Bot DS, you move along the corridor and find yourself at a junction that has three corridors leading from it. Which way now?

'Kay-8,' you announce quietly, but loud enough for your earpiece to pick it up.

'Captain?'

'Any luck with scanning the place?'

'Yes.'

'Good job.'

'Thank you, but the news is disappointing.'

A sudden emptiness fills your stomach. 'Go on.'

'Directly ahead of your position in about forty metres there are two humans and several other unidentifiable small biological life-forms.'

'No mass groupings of people, then?'

'Any prisoners must have already been moved.'

'Collo must've warned them.'

'That would be my conclusion too.'

'So, we still have no idea where the Slave Mart will be held and I doubt either of the people ahead is Tarak, which means unless whoever's ahead knows something...'

'I recommend an aggressive form of interrogation.'

You chuckle to yourself. 'Don't worry, Kay-8. I know how to be persuasive, out.'

You clutch your blaster tighter as you hurry along the corridor directly ahead. Turn to **133**.

146

You can manage to your eyes widen slightly as you see they are talking to Officer Cassidy. She was the Void Slavers' connection here in Aqua Polis! No wonder she suggested you go investigate Gate 13. Your blood starts to boil, but should you rush out? If you wish to remain where you are, turn to **15**. If you would rather reveal yourself and rush the trio, turn to **189**.

147

Once Orlando leaves you alone in the changing room, you place your earpiece back in your ear having removed it during the medical examination.

'Kay-8?'

'Captain?'

'I'm going to have a death fight very shortly. If I survive I will have fifty thousand credits and hopefully a means to locate Bo Collo or access his suite.'

'Would it not be wiser to search for Collo now that you are in sub-level beta?'

'You think I can't win a death fight?'

'I believe that death fighting is not something you excel at.'

'Thanks for the vote of confidence, Kay-8,' you answer sarcastically. 'It wouldn't be a good idea to look for Collo now as I think if I were to miss my scheduled fight... then I might suddenly find myself in a world of pain.'

'That is what you are going to be in when you enter the fighting ring.'

'We'll see. Out.'

You head over to a locker and put your belongings into it along with the earpiece and change into one of the one-piece fighting outfits you find hanging on the wall. You feel nervous, but at the same time you hope that through this fight you will get an angle on the whereabouts of Collo. Turn to **163**.

148

Having rendered the pair unconscious, you prop their bodies up against the alley wall. If you want to search their clothing, turn to **10**. Otherwise, turn to **61**.

149

Cassidy successfully tosses you over the gantry. The seawater landing doesn't hurt you, but within seconds you can feel the pull of the pipe that is sucking water to the desalination plant. There is nothing you can do to prevent yourself from being drawn into the pipe. You will drown long before the machinery in the plant eviscerates your body. Your adventure ends here.

150

Suddenly you come across a grille in the floor of the shaft you have been crawling along and you must cross over it. You peer through the slots of the grille and see that you are above a room that contains several creatures of the same species as Tojo, the beast that the Sovereigness was walking.

The creatures are meat-eating Drogs from the planet Yustudu. They are bred for fighting and the Sovereigness occasionally feeds them employees who have displeased her.

The creatures are too busy fighting amongst themselves to notice you, but still you feel apprehensive as you move across the grille. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **162**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **136**.

151

With lightning speed, you attempt to jab the creature through its open mouth and ram the barbed hook into its brain. Alas, you misjudge your timing slightly and the deathblow misses. Somehow the barbed fishhook breaks on its carapace and you find yourself armed with only your knife. Unfortunately, your knife won't be of much use to you and so your adventure comes to a bloody and brutal end as the Centi-Crab's pincers connect with your soft flesh.

152

'There is very little to report, I am afraid to say. The authorities on Aquatine have little to go on and their records are not particularly useful.'

'Tell me you got something for me to work on?' you whisper as you spot the train coming along to the platform edge.

'Having performed a very discreet search I have uncovered the names of three Void Slavers who are known to carry out raids in both the Outlying Territories and the Independent Systems.'

You step on board the train that pulls up at the platform edge and elect to stand. 'These names are in no particular order,' continues Kraven-8, 'Lixor Tarak, Bo Collo and Rhea Mosa.'

'Bo Collo,' you think to yourself, 'that name rings a bell.'

'You may recognize the name Bo Collo,' continues Kraven-8 almost as if he is reading your mind. 'Our records show that he used to be a gun-runner in the Caliban Nebula.'

You nod your head as you listen to your co-pilot. 'Good work, Kay-8,' you whisper into the speaker on your jacket's lapel. 'I'm going to catch up with my old friend at his place of work. I'll let you know what I learn from him.'

'I await further developments, Captain.' Your co-pilot signs off, followed by a slight buzz in your ear signalling the end of the conversation.

You remain on the train for another seventeen stops until it reaches the station you need to alight at; Zulu Farm. Turn to **203**.

153

You type in the number you read and transmit it back to the surface. Almost instantaneously, you receive a reply on the monitor. *Welcome to Wormwood. Proceed to Landing Disc 9 at the west end of the facility.* Turn to 173.

154

You open your eyes and rub your forehead as you have a splitting headache. 'Wh... what happened?'

'Welcome back, Captain,' greets Kraven-8. 'You have been unconscious for approximately twenty-three minutes.'

You can see out the viewport that the *Starhunt* is in warp-space. 'Whe... where are we?'

'En route to Omega.'

'Damn, I have one helluva headache.'

'The *Quantum Echo* used a sonic blast to render you unconscious. I suspect they were pirates looking to commandeer the ship.'

'So, what happened?'

'I terminated their piracy career.'

'Guess I missed all the fun, eh?'

'Affirmative.'

'Ah, well – I guess there will be some excitement on Omega. This rescue mission isn't going to be a walk in the park.'

Turn to **5**.

155

As you move to the right of the promontory, you suddenly notice there appears to be a footpath hewn out of the rock. Within minutes you have successfully rounded the obstacle and you see ahead of you a metal walkway spanning a crevice that cuts the ground in two. Just as you are about to step away from the promontory and walk towards the walkway, you hear a high-pitched bleep in your left ear coming from just about level with your head. You turn to see that an Anti-Personnel Limpet Mine, attached to the rock face of the promontory, is powering up to explode. You have seconds to react. Roll 2 dice and compare it to your BLASTER SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current BLASTER SKILL score, turn to **88**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current BLASTER SKILL score, turn to **197**.

156

With a resounding clang, a lump of space rock collides with the *Starhunt*. The ship suffers 3 points of damage to its HULL INTEGRITY. Turn to **200**.

157

From inside the room you hear a male voice scream, followed by a thump and then the sound of something electrical discharging before the smell of burnt flesh fills your nostrils. You step into the room and see a body smouldering against a console on the opposite side from the doorway. A young Asian woman is screaming and waving her arms at you.

'Don't shoot,' she cries. 'Don't shoot me. I'm unarmed.'

As you train your blaster on her, you gaze around the room. Given the amount of consoles and activity occurring across them, you guess that this is the moon base's control room. Your blaster shot must have sent the man against the console, which blew up on him; too bad. Mysteriously, there is a large sandpit on the right-hand side of the room about three metres lower than the rest of the room, while on the left side of the room lies another door.

'Sorry I fried your friend,' you say to the woman, 'but it was him or me.'

Turn to **199**.

158

'This is Captain Tilda Means of the *T.S.S Wolfe*. By the authority of the TCA under the Charter of Meridian Prime I order you to stand down *Starhunt* and prepare to be boarded for violating the air traffic laws of Aquatine.'

The Charter of Meridian Prime was signed over fifty years ago and as a result the TCA is able to enforce its laws within the Independent Systems if asked to do so by a sovereign state.

'We're in the Outlying Territories, Captain Means,' you answer her. 'The TCA has no authority here and the Charter of Meridian Prime covers the Independent Systems. I'm well versed in interstellar treaties.'

'I don't give a...' The holo-image suddenly flickers with interference, momentarily cutting into Means' reply. '...think you know. Article forty-seven, paragraph three, subsection eight gives me the power of pursuit over violators of sovereign state laws.'

'Fair enough,' you reply with a shrug of your shoulders, 'but don't tell me a Hawk Destroyer was dispatched to find me because Aqua Polis was struck by Void Slavers hours before I left that water world. What the hell are you doing about them?'

'What do you know of Void Slavers?'

You must now decide whether to tell the Destroyer captain the truth (turn to **182**), or keep the information you know to yourself (turn to **201**).

159

'Say hello to Mosa for me in hell!' you snap at Collo as you walk away from the airlock. The only good kind of slaver is a dead slaver.

You activate your earpiece. 'Kay-8?'

'Captain?'

'Power the ship up and plot a star-drive to Querto IV. We're off to catch up with Lixor Tarak.'

'Bo Collo was cooperative?'

'Extremely, although he did manage to send a message to someone.'

'To whom?'

'No idea. Out.'

You wonder whom Collo contacted. Was it Tarak or the Sovereigness herself? Your thoughts are interrupted by a buzz at the door to the suite. You walk over to it and find yourself looking at an I-Bot carrying a cashbox in its hands.

'Your winnings,' it says as it extends its arms to hand you the box.

'Thanks,' you reply as you take the box. You then step out into the corridor. 'Mr. Collo's indisposed,' you explain. 'He told me to go back to the gym and train.'

You head off in the same direction that Collo had brought you to his suite, but as soon as you realize that no one is paying attention to you, you stop a moment and peer into the box. It contains fifty thousand credits. Pleased with yourself, you head off to the *Starhunt*. You may write 50,000 credits on your *Adventure Sheet*. Such good fortune means you may restore 1 LUCK point. Turn to **137**.

160

You leave the shed and crouch low as you move across the cavern, hiding behind crates or equipment as you do so. As you stop behind an unmanned mechanized power drill, you spot several miners come out of a doorway that looks like the exit from an elevator system. If it goes up, then it should go to the facility itself. As you watch the miners walk on by, you make your move. Before you reach the door, you hear a yell and then a blaster bolt explodes close to your feet. You spin around and instantly return fire in the direction of the shot. You hear a cry, but you have no time to celebrate your sharpshooting skills as another blast whistles past your head and then another, followed by too many to count. Seconds later your body slumps to the ground, steaming from blaster marks. Your mission to rescue your sister is at an end.

161

'We could be here all day,' sighs Arthur. 'All you need to know is that Under-Aqua is basically a city beneath this city. It's a combination of sewer pipes, air-vents, abandoned tunnels and who knows what else.'

'Is it inhabited?'

'Yeah, by hobos, junkies and the under-scum of society who don't wish to be found.'

'Your usual acquaintances, then?'

Arthur gives a small grin before grimacing in a serious manner. 'However, you should be more worried about the Giant Rats, Sump Monsters and Armoured Centi-Crabs.'

'Sump monsters? Centi-Crabs?'

'I've never laid eyes on a Sump Monster; they live amongst the sewer filth and eat the occasional sanitation worker. As for Centi-Crabs, they climb into Under-Aqua from the ocean beneath us and now that it's their breeding season they tend to be quite aggressive.'

'Okay,' you reply, puzzled. 'What's with the zoological diatribe, Dr. Al Barrak?'

'Because, my old friend, if you want to discover anything about what happened to your sister I suggest you go to Gate 79. I have it on good authority that the Slavers gained access through that gate.'

'79?'

'It's one of the entry points to the sewer network and a few days ago a Centi-Crab killed a worker. Now, no one knows about his death as the powers that be are keeping that quiet. A good source of mine says that...' He leans in closer to you and lowers his voice, 'Well, they've heard that the Slavers' contact will be there to get paid for their services. So I suggest you head over there now and see what you can discover.'

'Okay.'

'Now, don't think I'll sit here idle as you risk life and limb in Under-Aqua. I'll go and make a few social visits to some lowlifes I have a feeling might know something more about today's raid.'

Make a note of 79 on your *Adventure Sheet*. If you wish to ask about the Sovereigness, turn to **129**. If you want to know more about the movements of Slavers after a raid, turn to **37**. If you have learnt all you want to know, then turn to **70**.

162

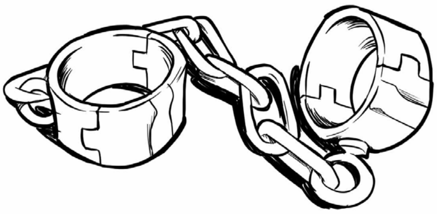
You quickly shimmy across the grille and continue on your way. About a quarter of an hour later you find yourself at a hatch above another restroom. You raise the hatch slightly and peer down as you listen for anyone present. The restroom is empty. You drop down and find yourself in the men's toilets. You raise your blaster and step out into the corridor. Turn to **23**.

163

'I see you've changed,' says Orlando about twenty-five minutes later when he returns. 'Excellent. I was going to suggest it as... well, blood can be difficult to get out of clothing.'

'Is the Painmaster ready?'

Orlando grins. 'The Painmaster was born ready.'



Turn to **184**.

164

The planet Wormwood appears before you as the *Starhunt* enters real-space at the location of the Slave Mart after a ninety-minute journey. Wormwood has a nasty look to it; the planet's colour is a mixture of brown and orange and black clouds seem to cover the globe. You look at the readout on the monitor by your hands. It reads:

> *Planet: Wormwood – an inhospitable world. Frequent volcanic activity renders the atmosphere unsuitable for long-term human habitation.*
> *Class: I – Inhospitable to colonization.*
> *Population: Unknown*

'Wormwood looks friendly.'

'Irony, Captain?'

You wink at your co-pilot. 'Scan the surface; there must be a concentration of human readings somewhere. That'll be the Slave Mart.'

As the *Starhunt* moves in closer, Kraven-8 performs a thorough scan of the planet's surface. 'Captain,' he announces, 'I have located a mineral ore mining facility built onto the side of an active volcano. There are close to two hundred humans within it.'

'A mining facility astride a volcano? Bet my sister thinks she's in hell itself.' You punch in a few commands so that the navi-computer will take you down into Wormwood's atmosphere within reach of the mining facility. Seconds later there is a buzz on the dashboard's communications system and a blue light flashes repeatedly.

'Incoming message from the surface,' explains Kraven-8. 'It is a read-only message.'

'Display it,' you reply curiously as you look down at the monitor by your hands.

ENTER PASSCODE: _ _ _

If you wrote down a number you found in Bo Collo's office on Omega then you may turn to that number, as it is the corresponding paragraph that you need to continue your rescue mission. Otherwise, turn to **124**.

165

The *Starhunt* emerges from the hulk yard in time to see the Hammer-head Freighter disappear as its star-drive engines engage. As for the Weland-Bergstein Annihilator Class Destroyer Escort, it is banking hard and coming about to face you.

'Damn,' you curse. 'The Hammer's just star-drived.'

There is a buzz on the dashboard's communications system as a blue light flashes repeatedly.

'Incoming message from the approaching ship,' explains Kraven-8.

'Put it through.'

'You may have got to Rhea and Bo,' drones a dull male voice. 'But The Mighty Tarak will obliterate you from existence.'

Turn to **176**.

166

Waiting a few minutes until you are sure the coast is clear you decide to shuffle back the way you came, faster than you had crawled forward. Within a few minutes you have dropped back into the corridor and you head into the hangar quay through the door. You are alone apart from some sea skiffs bobbing up and down on the water that surrounds the jetties that make up the hangar. The quickest way to contact the *Starhunt* would be to get out to sea. You jump on the nearest skiff and start up its engine. You then steer away from the jetty and head along a tunnel illuminated by orange neon lights. Within a few minutes the skiff emerges out into the ocean that surrounds Aqua Polis. You contact your co-pilot and request an immediate evacuation.

'Local authorities will not take too kindly to a ship leaving its docking bay sans the captain and flying–'

'Get here quickly, Kay-8,' you shout back, 'our next port of call is Omega.'

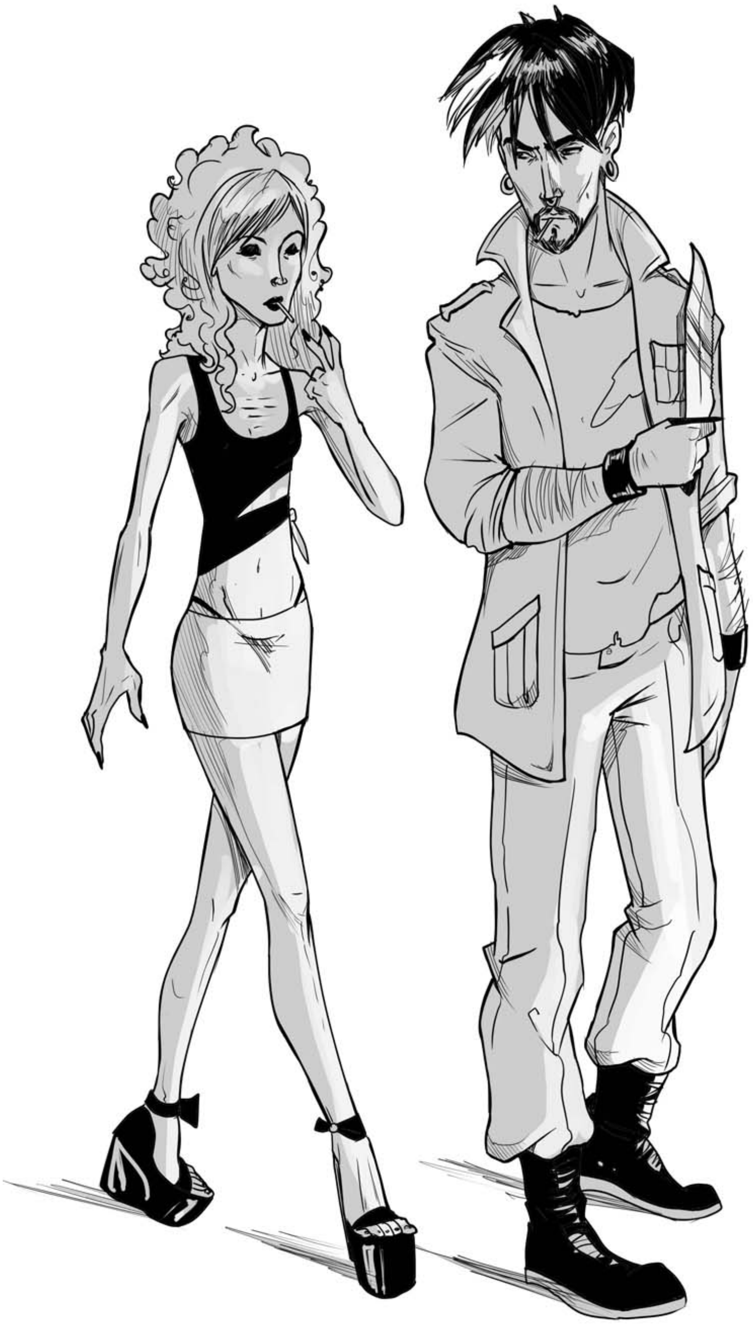
Turn to **141**.

167

You and the dancing troupe hurtle down the corridor, which starts to veer to the right. As you are in the lead at point, on turning the corner you find yourself facing two armed men coming towards you. With pinpoint accuracy you manage to blast one of the approaching men straight in the face, killing him instantly. You sweep out your left arm to stop the girls from running round the corridor and then, using the edge of the corridor as a shield, you proceed to have a fire-fight with the remaining security guard in Blaster Combat.

SECURITY GUARD	SKILL 7	STAMINA 9
	BLASTER SKILL 8	

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **204** to resolve this combat. If you defeat the security guard, turn to **101**. If you are killed then the dancing troupe and your sister will be sold as planned and your rescue mission has failed.



168

You react quickly enough to block the trajectory of your sister's body and manage to ensure she isn't thrown out of the *Starhunt*. Unfortunately, she lets go of the blaster, which disappears into the atmosphere of Wormwood.

'Lucky catch,' complains the Sovereigness. 'There's plenty of time to die, though.'

'This is a fight between me and you,' you jab a finger at the woman, who has got to her feet. 'One of us is going out the docking port.'

'Well,' sneers the Sovereigness. 'I hope you can fly.'

You squeeze your sister's shoulder. 'Take the others amidships and tell Kay-8 to take us back down towards the surface.'

She nods her head and takes the other dancing girls with her.

'Let's get it on!' cries the Sovereigness.

Turn to **122**.

169

You manage to hit the ground without seriously injuring yourself and suffer only a minor crack to the ribs; take 2 points of STAMINA damage. If you're still alive, you stand up and dust yourself down as you watch the *Starhunt* zip away into the distance towards a massive metallic structure that hugs the side of a fairly large volcano. There's no time to lose and you immediately head towards the same facility. Turn to **185**.

170

With a resounding crack, the door buckles under your terrific shoulder barge. As you crash through the door, you topple onto the ground and almost fall down the staircase in front of you. Despite breaking down the door, no alarm appears to have gone off.

'Could be a silent alarm,' you think to yourself and immediately pull out your blaster just to be on the safe side.

You cautiously go down the staircase. Turn to **83**.

171

'You're trespassing,' cries a shabbily dressed man, who is likely a junkie suffering from narco-delusions. However, the sharp blade he is menacingly pointing at you ensures you're going to have to fight him to get past. By his side stands a woman with dirty blonde hair and wearing clothes that leave little to the imagination.

'That's right, Lenny,' she screams, slapping the shoulder of the junkie. 'You know what we do with trespassing scum.'

You will have to fight both using the rules for unarmed combat. They are surprisingly strong, probably as a result of their narco-habit.

MALE STREET JUNKIE	SKILL 10	STAMINA 7
FEMALE STREET JUNKIE	SKILL 8	STAMINA 5

If you defeat them, turn to **148**.

172

With quick reflexes, you attempt to stab the creature through its open mouth and ram the barbed hook into its brain. You have timed your move well and you successfully skewer the Centi-Crab's brain. The creature keels over, the fishhook lodged in its mouth, dead. You decide not to hang around in case anymore of them appear and you head out through the bulk-door to continue on your way. Turn to **32**.

173

That's probably not a good idea,' you sigh as you take the *Starhunt* lower into the planet's atmosphere. 'If we land at the facility at LD9 then I'm sure I'll be escorted into the place. I need to sneak in and organize a break-out.'

'I have an idea.'

You look to your co-pilot. 'Yeah?'

'We will hug the surface as we approach the facility and you can jump down a few kilometres ahead of it.'

'Jump down from a moving ship?'

'I will fly at a speed that will ensure your body is likely to survive the impact.'

'Okay – and then?'

'I will land at the facility and announce I belong to an anonymous bidder.'

'Risky.'

'The alternative is we land there together and you will have to find a way to free your sister without resorting to subterfuge.'

'Subterfuge, eh? Now that's a word you don't hear every day.' You run your hands through your hair as you quickly assess the plan of your I-Bot co-pilot. 'Damn it, Kay-8. Who knows if an I-Bot can buy slaves, but you're right that it's unlikely I can free my sister by waltzing in the front door. Okay. Take us close to the surface and slow to a... reasonable speed.'

'Affirmative.'

As you pop the buckle on your seatbelt, your co-pilot speaks again. 'Captain, should we contact the *Wolfe*?'

If you want to send a message to Captain Means, turn to **198**. If you want to wait and contact the TCA Destroyer later, turn to **75**.

174

You follow the corridor and find that after a couple of minutes it starts to angle upwards and then you are climbing a staircase of metal steps. You try to walk on your toes so as to keep the sound of your footsteps to a minimum. As you reach the top of the staircase you find yourself staring into an industrial working site. Mining equipment fills the cavern you are about to enter and somewhere in the distance you can hear digging. The heat is stifling and you are sweating heavily. You are just about to rush forward and hide behind a stack of crates when you spot a man with a hard hat walking your way. You could shoot him, but that might draw unnecessary attention. So you decide to take him out the old-fashioned way. Turn to **78**.

175

Officer Cassidy head-butts you, jarring your senses. Then she attempts to haul you over the edge of the gantry and pitch you into the seawater below. Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your SKILL score, turn to **131**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your SKILL score, turn to **149**.

176

It seems that the fight between the *Starhunt* and *The Mighty Tarak* will be to the death.

THE MIGHTY TARAK	WEAPONS SYSTEM 7
	DEFLECTOR SHIELDS 16
	HULL INTEGRITY 20

Make a note of this paragraph and then turn to **205** to resolve this combat. If the *Starhunt* reduces *The Mighty Tarak* to HULL INTEGRITY 0, turn to **96**.

177

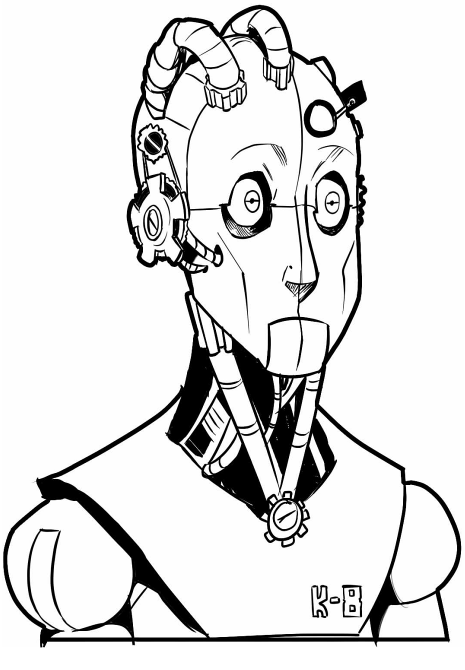
You jump up but fail to pull yourself into the ventilation system. You crash to the floor with a resounding thud. At that point the door to the restroom opens and the Sovereigness and Tojo step through. Tojo is hissing and baring fangs as a reptilian tongue flicks out like a snake.

'Now what do we have here, Tojo?' says the Sovereigness as she bends down to release the leash on her pet. She answers her own question. 'We have someone who thinks that walking past me in a mask wouldn't go unnoticed. They should have taken it off – after all it's not like I know every minion who works for me.'

Tojo is a Drog that likes to feed on fresh meat. You are his next meal. Your adventure ends here as the Drog tears you to pieces under the unflinching gaze of his mistress.

178

You narrowly manage to steer the ship around a spinning piece of space rock and avoid a collision that could have caused some serious damage to the ship. Turn to **200**.



179

You manage to side-step an incoming blaster shot and instinctively fire off a shot in the direction you feel the incoming shot came from. Turn to **157**.

180

Your leap is successful and you crash-land on the other side of the crevice. A fall would have been fatal. You continue on your way. Turn to **139**.

181

As you spin the wheel on the manhole cover your eyes focus on the re-breathers and the fishhooks on the wall. You wonder why there are fishhooks hanging on the wall next to the sewer network; maybe for dredging through the filth? If you choose to take a re-breather and a fishhook with you, make a note on your *Adventure Sheet*. Then turn to **108**.

182

You lick your lips a little before answering. 'Look, Captain Means. Those Void Slaver bastards kidnapped my younger sister and I've been hot on their trail since Aquatine. We're not in the Primary Systems and so, as you know, the means of getting things done or finding out information isn't always... pleasant.'

'You destroyed the Slaver who was hiding in the Mardavian Asteroid Field?'

'Yeah, it was Rhea Mosa. She carried out the raid on Aqua Polis.'

'You spaced the man linked to Slavers on Omega?'

Your head gives a few nods. 'Bo Collo, another Slaver linked to the raid.'

'And we've detected another ship has recently been destroyed close to our current position.'

'That's all that's left of Lixor Tarak.'

'Another notorious Void Slaver.'

'Yes.'

'Looks like you've been busy doing our job of taking down the Slavers.'

'And I'm not even on the TCA payroll.'

'Have you discovered the location of the Slave Mart?'

Your hesitation in answering gives your answer.

'Would you like to share it?'

'Not really. I need to go get my sister and if a TCA Destroyer suddenly pops up at the Mart then I'm not sure what the consequences of that could mean to her, her friends or all the other prisoners waiting to be sold. These Slavers are ruthless. They might execute them all just to spite the TCA.'

There is a long pause before the holo-image speaks again. 'If I let you go about your business and give you a call-sign to contact us, would you be able to do what you have to do and then... send for the cavalry?'

'You're letting me go?'

'On condition that you contact us so that we can strike these Slavers at the heart of their operation. A Slave Mart will have all the proverbial eggs in one basket, including the Sovereigness and maybe then we can end this sickening trade once and for all.'

'Even if the Sovereigness falls, someone else will rise to take her place. Names change, but evil is eternal.'

'Perhaps. Do we have a deal?'

'Won't you just calculate my star-drive trajectory once I've jumped?'

'The odds of correctly calculating your destination are...' Means' holo-head blurs slightly as on board her own ship she moves slightly to speak to one of her crew before continuing her conversation with you. 'Astronomical, so I doubt we'll be that lucky in tracing you. Now then, Captain. Do we have a deal?'

'Okay, Captain Means. Send me your call-sign and leave me be.'

'You might think I'm taking a risk,' answers Means, 'but I know how it feels to lose someone to Slavers. My cousin was taken over a decade ago... he was never found. Good luck with rescuing your sister and please... send me your co-ordinates because my Peacekeeper Company is itching to launch a full assault.'

'Don't worry, Captain. Once I've settled my score you can come in and clean up the leftovers.'

Captain Means salutes you and then the holo-receiver deactivates.

'The *Wolfe* has provided us with their call-sign,' informs Kraven-8, 'and their weapons are powering down.'

'Time to go,' you answer as your hands punch in commands to the navi-computer. Moments later the *Starhunt*'s star-drive engines kick in and the ship jumps into warp-space on course for Wormwood. Turn to **164**.

183

You jump up and manage to pull yourself into the ventilation system. In the confined space you push the hatch back in place and then head forward. You remember which direction you must travel from the layout on the computer terminal you studied. Turn to **98**.

184

Moments later you walk out into an arena and are escorted to a caged fighting ring surrounded by a sea of spectators. The Painmaster stands before you, a black man with dreadlocked hair and an impressive physique. You study him as you listen to the commentator's announcement.

'And now, ladies and gentlemen, for your immediate pleasure and satisfaction be prepared to witness our celebrated ring hero the Painmaster face off the challenge of a new fighter who dares to take him on.'

As the cage gate is locked shut behind you, you notice the card-girl walking past with a sign saying: 'Round 1'.

'Fight on!' cries the commentator.

The Painmaster throws his hands into the air and tips his head back to let loose a primordial bellow of rage before rushing you. Roll 2 dice and compare it to your SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **194**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to **121**.

185

You find yourself in a landscape devoid of hospitality. The rocky brown surface is dotted with vegetation and boulders and in every direction you look there is a haze rising from the surface caused by the intense heat seeping through the rock itself. A few hundred metres to your right a geyser of superheated gas suddenly breaks through the surface and hisses as it makes contact with the air. Maybe a two-kilometre jog to the facility ahead isn't such a good idea after all? As you scramble over the baking-hot surface, you find yourself facing a particularly steep promontory. You can either clamber up and over it, or circumvent it to either the right or left. If you wish to go right, turn to **94**. If you would rather head left, turn to **155**. Or if you would prefer to climb the promontory and go over the top, turn to **134**.

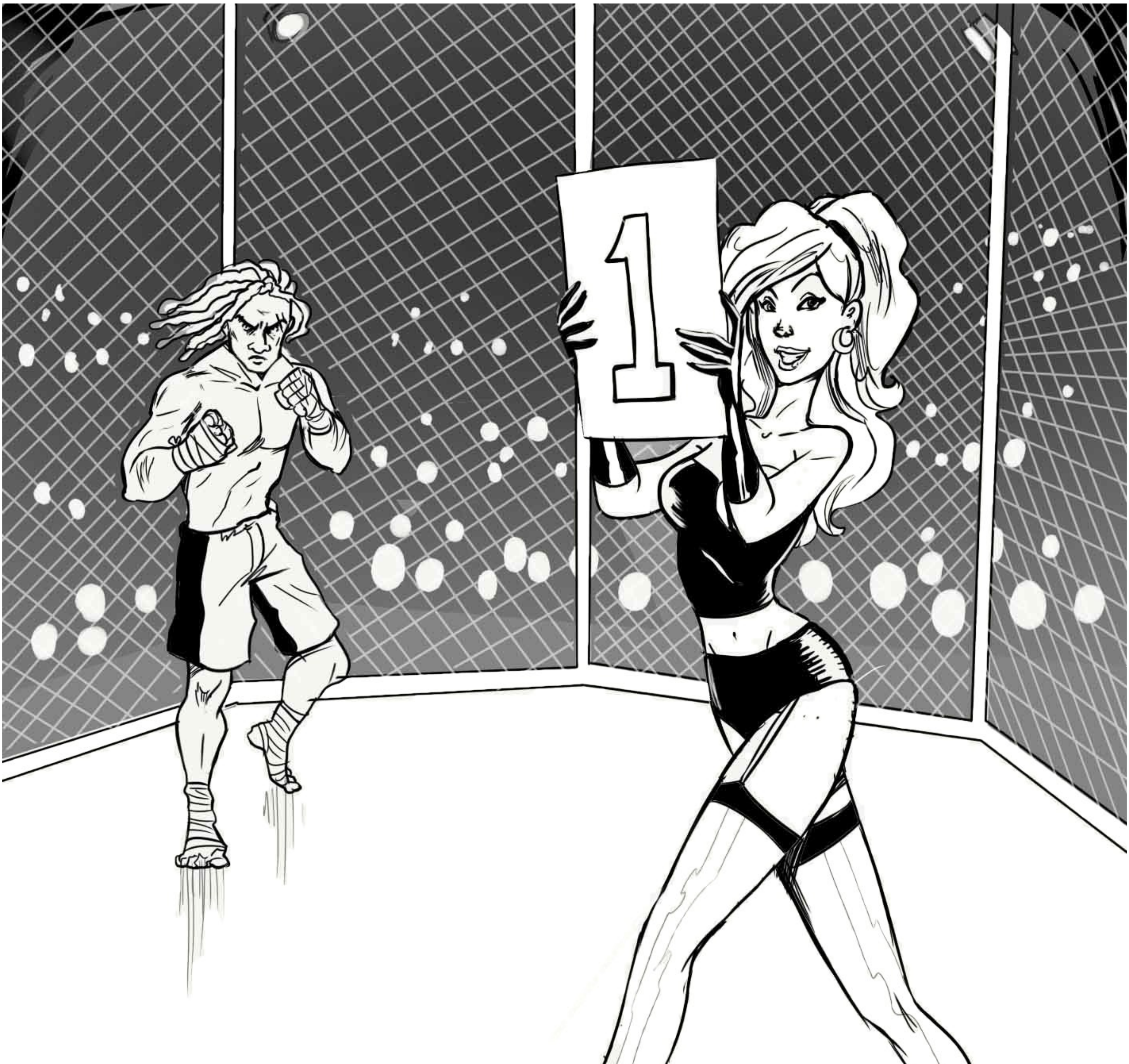
186

'I'm going with a gut feeling here, Kay 8,' you inform your co-pilot. 'I think it's probably a space pirate ploy to hijack the ship. Best just get on with finding out where the hell my sister is.'

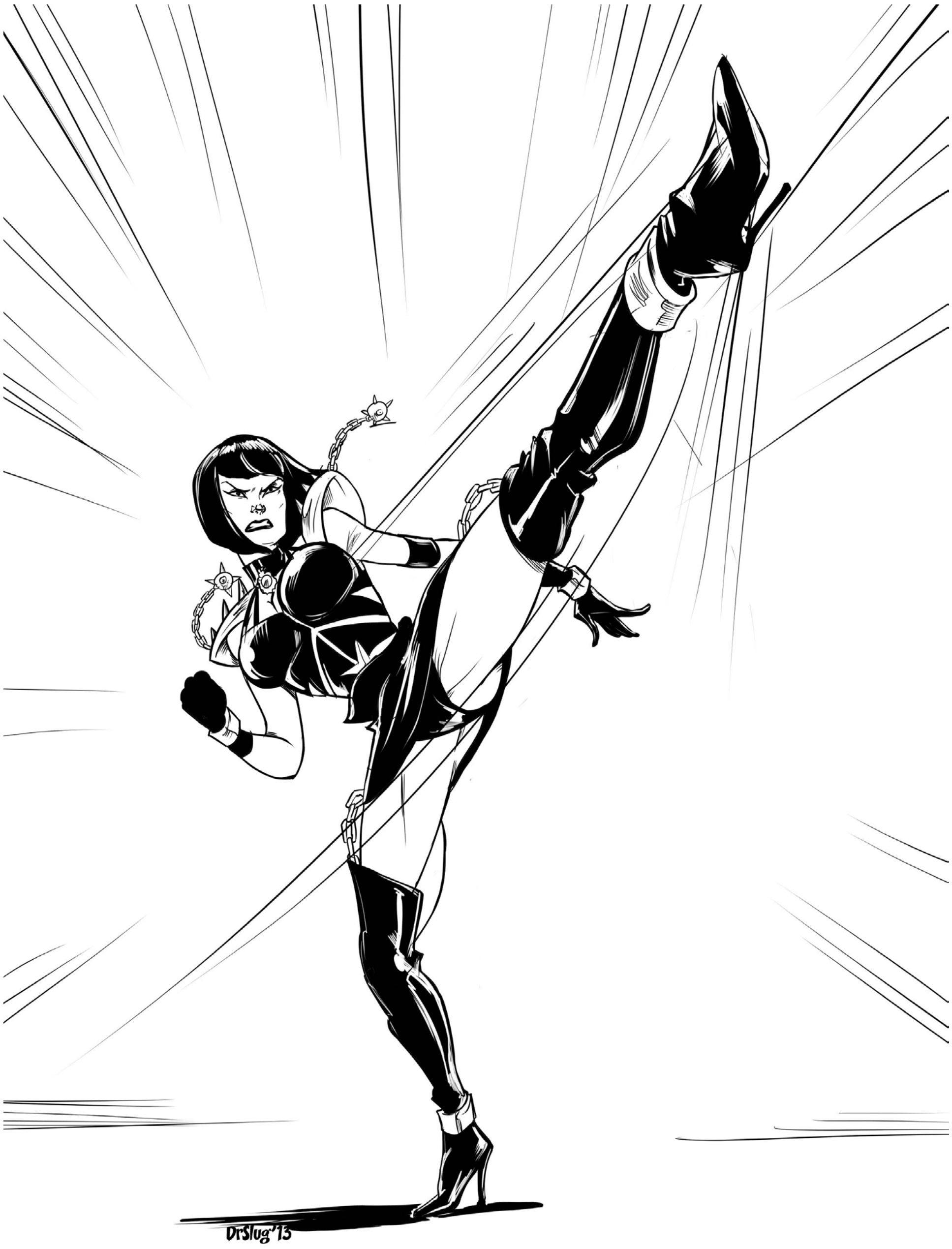
Moments later you activate the star-drive engines and the *Starhunt* slips into warp-space en route to Omega. Turn to **5**.

187

Your hands clutch out for something to cling on to, but the loose rock falls away


1

with you. All you can manage is to scream in futility as you dive head-first into the lava flow beneath you. Your sister will not be rescued as your mission, like your life, has ended.



188

There is a loud buzz and the elevator doors slide open. You step out into a metallic corridor and you quickly surmise that you are out of the volcano and inside the facility. You can only walk directly ahead and so you do so. As you walk there is a slight buzz in your ear before you hear the voice of Kraven-8.

'Captain, I have been trying to contact you for the last twenty minutes.'

'I was underground,' you reply.

'I see.'

'What's happening with you?'

'I informed the security detail who greeted me at the docking disc that I was here for the Slave Mart for my master, who wishes to remain incognito.'

'They bought it.'

'Affirmative. However, being an I-Bot it seems there is no need to offer me any hospitality and so I am to remain here on-board the *Starhunt* until the hour of the Mart.'

'When is that?'

'I do not know, Captain. They did not say and I did not ask in case it was a ruse to catch me out.'

'Good work, Kay-8. I'm currently in the lower levels of the facility and I'm looking for a computer terminal so I can get a layout of the place.'

'I did think of scanning the facility from here, Captain. However, I think such a move would be detected and the consequences would be dire.'

'Yeah, just sit tight. I'll find out where my sister is and then call you for an immediate evac.'

'Affirmative.'

As you finish the conversation, you turn the corridor to find a woman approaching you walking a leashed creature that appears to be a cross between a guard dog and a lizard. The woman is clad in a seductive PVC outfit, complete with studded knee-high boots. The thought strikes you that this must be the Sovereigness and now's your chance to blast her. However, the idea quickly fades as killing her right now would be pointless and just result in complications to the plan of rescuing your sister. You pass by her and carry on your way. Unbeknownst to you, as you have your back to her, as she passes the Sovereigness turns her head and frowns at you. Something about your choice of clothing and the location you are both in is playing on her mind.

'Where are you going?' You hear the question and know that it is being asked of you.

You turn and wave the satchel at her.

'Another faulty scanner?'

Your left hand thumbs-up signals confirmation to her second question. The Sovereigness shakes her bob of jet-black hair. 'Looks like we need to change supplier.' She turns on her heels and heads off to the elevator you've just left. 'Come along, Tojo,' she says to the creature on the leash. 'Time to do your business.'

You turn around and continue along the corridor. Turn to **140**.

189

Pushing the grille open, you emerge as fast as you can. Officer Cassidy looks shocked as she sees you emerge from the grille. It is her face that the two men see and react to. They spin round, draw their blasters and fire indiscriminately in your direction. You are blasted back into the sewers and luckily are dead before your body strikes the ledge pathway, rolls off through the force field and, with an undignified plop, disappears beneath the flowing stream of filth. Your adventure ends here.

190

Your failure to notify the *Wolfe* of your location has led to your undoing. Outnumbered and outgunned, you have no means of escape at your disposal. Your sister squeezes your hand tightly as the

Sovereigness advances towards you.

‘Take that one to my quarters,’ she points towards your sister. ‘After a good flogging I will train her to be my new Drog keeper.’ Her pointing finger then picks out two of the other dancers. ‘Those two can be sold.’ She walks over to a window port of the observation room and presses a button. With an angry hiss the window port opens. ‘As for the rest...,’ she turns her back on you and the remaining dancers, who start to beg for their lives, and heads towards the entrance to the room. ‘Throw out the chaff.’

From this height, you will not survive the fall. Your life and adventure are over.

191

The door refuses to budge and you cause yourself 4 points of STAMINA damage. You must *Test your Skill* again and you will continue to cause yourself 4 points of STAMINA damage if your two dice roll equals or exceeds your current SKILL score. If you manage to roll less than your current SKILL score, turn to **170**.

192

You drag the unconscious body of the miner towards the door of what appears to be some kind of storage shed. Inside you find some rope and quickly bind the man. As you tie him up, you notice a heavy-duty heat-resistant full-body suit and mask hanging on the wall of the shed. If you wear that, then you could move around this facility unnoticed, although your movement would be restricted. If you decide that wearing the suit is a good idea, turn to **138**. If you believe that you can succeed without the suit, turn to **160**.

193

You step back into the living quarters to see that Collo is hunched over the oak desk and appears to be using some kind of electronic device. Your first instinct is to blast him, but instead you throw your blaster across the room and it ricochets off the back of his head. Stunned for a second time, Collo slides to the floor in an untidy heap and you race over to the desk to see what he was doing. It appears to be some sort of communications device of a type you’ve never seen before.

‘Now, who were you alerting?’ you say to Collo’s prone body. ‘Buddies here on Omega or further afield?’

Your body is still aching from the fight and you really need to interrogate Collo. You know that you haven’t the energy to punch it out of him and so you will have to improvise. You drag his body towards the door that leads to the suite’s airlock. Turn to **38**.

194

The Painmaster tries to land a flurry of deadly blows on you, which you are prepared to counter; lose 2 STAMINA points as your arms block the incoming blows. You must now fight your opponent despite your wounds.

PAINMASTER SKILL 9 STAMINA 21

If you can reduce the Painmaster to a STAMINA score of 15 within five rounds of combat then turn to **22**. Otherwise the Death Fighter proves to be too strong for you and beats you unconscious. Your battered body enters a comatose state and whether or not you will awaken is of little consequence to your current rescue mission, which is finished.

195

‘Get us out of here,’ you tell Kraven-8 via your earpiece.

‘Over my dead body!’

Your sister screams in terror. Your eyes turn to the docking port and see a cloak-less Sovereigness standing on-board your ship. Hate fills her eyes and her lithe body is tensed to strike using some form of martial arts. You withdraw your holstered blaster with lightning dexterity, but the Sovereigness is one step ahead. Her left leg roundhouses the blaster from your outstretched hand; it clatters to the floor before sliding over to the feet of your sister. As your younger sibling bends to pick it up, the Sovereigness executes a forward roll to reach your sister and then, manhandling her roughly, the leader of the Void Slavers rolls backwards, catapulting your sister towards the open docking port. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **168**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **92**.

196

Leaving the computer terminal behind, you wander down the corridor a few more metres until you come to a set of doors marked: ‘MEN/WOMEN’. You walk through the door marked ‘WOMEN’ and finding it empty, you enter a cubicle and remove the disguise you have been wearing. Taking your blaster and re-breather out of the satchel, you stick your blaster into your holster and attach the re-breather to your belt as you don’t need it within the facility. Stepping out of the cubicle, you gaze up at the restroom’s ceiling and spot the hatch that leads into the ventilation system. You will need to stand on a sink and then jump up to push aside the hatch and gain entry. You successfully jump and push aside the hatch – now you must jump again and pull yourself into the ventilation system Roll 2 dice and compare it to your current SKILL score. If the number rolled is lower than your current SKILL score, turn to **183**. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than your current SKILL score, turn to **177**.

197

You draw your blaster in a split second and fire at the Limpet Mine. Unfortunately your aim is marginally off and your blast blows a chunk of rock from the promontory. There is no time for a second shot – the Limpet Mine explodes. The explosion is designed to maim, not kill victims when placed on the ground. At head height the resulting blast is enough to decapitate you. As your corpse slumps to the ground with jets of blood squirting from the bloody stump that was your neck, your head bounces on the rocky surface and then rolls casually over the edge of the crevice into a flowing river of lava. Your adventure is over.

198

‘Good point. If we call them, then we’ll have about ninety minutes before the Peacekeepers will storm the place as the perfect back-up.’ You stand up and move to the cockpit’s door. ‘Do it, Kay-8. Activate that call-sign and hope I can get my sister out before the *Wolfe* arrives and blows the place to kingdom come.’

Make a note of the number 112, and then turn to **100**.

199

‘Now,’ you begin, bluntly. ‘I’m going to ask you some questions. Give me short answers. I don’t wish to ask any question twice.’ You keep the blaster levelled on her. ‘And don’t do anything stupid or I’ll kneecap you. We both know that blaster damage to the human knee can never be repaired. Do you understand me?’

The woman nods.

‘What did you say?’

‘Yes,’ she squeaks. ‘I understand you.’

‘Good. First question – who are you?’

‘Lee Lee Huang.’

‘What do you do here, Ms. Huang?’

‘I’m the administrator of this facility and...’

‘Administrator, eh? Bit of a grandiose title for a Void Slaver.’

‘I’m not a Slaver.’

‘But Slavers like Bo Collo and Lixor Tarak use this base to hold their prisoners before a Slave Mart. So if you’re not a Slaver, then you’re just in the pay of one?’

The woman says nothing.

'That was a question.'

'Mr. Tarak owns this facility and is my generous employer.'

'Generous employer... the guy has my sister, who was abducted on Aquatine along with her dance troupe. Where's Tarak now?'

'He left after receiving a message from Starport Omega.'

You shake your head. Collo must have contacted Tarak before you spaced him. 'I didn't ask why he left, I asked where is he now?'

'I don't know.'

'Wrong answer.'

'No, I don't know where Mr. Tarak's gone, but that's his office.' She points towards the door on the left side of the room. 'Maybe his itinerary is in there?'

'His office, eh?' You point your blaster at the sandpit. 'And the sandpit is his play area?'

'No. His pet Sand Octopi are in there.'

You pull a face of surprise. 'What do they eat?'

'Meat. He usually chucks them a rodent or two but that doesn't satisfy their hunger. He fed them an associate of his once who was messing with the merchandise.'

'An act of generosity on his behalf, I'm sure.'

The woman says nothing but shuffles nervously on her feet.

'Messing with the merchandise? They were screwing the slave girls?'

'No, he was raping the males.'

'Ah. Well, Mr. Tarak might have a problem with rapists, but I have a problem with Void Slavers. So, I'm going to check out his office and you are going to accompany me, okay?

The woman nods and starts to move slowly towards you as you walk over to the door on the left side of the room. As you stand in front of the door, it doesn't open. So your left hand waves over the sensor pad to the left of the door. The door slides upwards and from within there comes a nasty growl. At the same time, on the periphery of your vision you see Ms. Huang start to run towards the main doors. You manage to fire a shot at her right knee just before something leaps from out of the dark room and knocks your blaster from your hand. As Ms. Huang crashes to the floor in agony, your blaster skips across the floor and disappears over the edge into the sandpit. Cross the blaster off your *Adventure Sheet* and then turn to **11**.

200

'That was close,' you announce. 'Can it get any worse?'

Suddenly a buzz on the dashboard's communications system sounds as a blue light flashes repeatedly above your head. 'Unknown source of communication,' explains Kraven-8.

'Put it through.'

'I don't know who the hell you are,' screams a woman's voice. 'But you're not going to leave here in this lifetime.'

Turn to **113**.

201

You reply with a single word. 'Nothing.'

Captain Means frowns. 'Nothing, eh? Well that's too bad for you. Any attempt to flee and I'll have you obliterated. We've been searching for Captain Arisoto the so-called Pirate Prince, but a petty criminal like you can be my first catch of the day.'

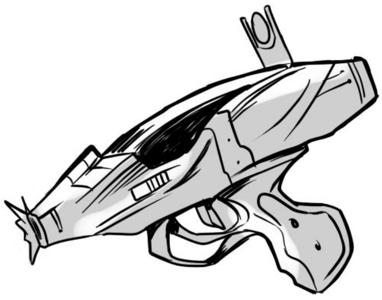
The holo-call abruptly ends. The approaching Hawk Destroyer fills up the viewport of the *Starhunt* and it suddenly dawns on you that you are going to be waylaid for some time. The ship shudders violently for a brief moment as a tractor beam locks onto you. There is no chance of star-driving to the Slave Mart now. Your rescue mission has ended.

202

Stepping over a couple of small rats, you follow the ledge pathway until you reach a ladder going upwards. A sign next to the ladder reads: 'Hangar Quay' with a vertical arrow. You decide you'll no longer need the re-breather and fishhook so you prop them up against the wall before you carefully ascend the ladder to the top, where a grilled manhole cover lies. You can already hear voices before you're able to take a peek through the metal slats of the grille. If you've spoken to Officer Cassidy, turn to **146**; otherwise turn to **20**.

203

You quickly get off the train and move towards the station's exit turnstile. It may have been seven years since you were last in this district of the city, but you know exactly where you are going. There are few pedestrians around as you make your way through the streets to the Happy Hour Zone. At this time of the day only those who never stop partying are likely to be in this neighbourhood. If you were here at night then you know from experience it would be hard to move for revellers. At last you reach the building you were last in seven years ago. You notice the outside paintjob has changed from pale green to orange. A new neon pink light flashes the name: 'Fishnet High'. As you head towards the salon-style doors, you sense someone or something is sneaking up behind you. Turn to **118**.



204
Blaster Combat

Having made a note of the paragraph you have left, along with your opponent's SKILL, STAMINA and BLASTER SKILL score, follow this procedure to resolve blaster combat. If you succeed in defeating your opponent, then return to the paragraph you left to consult this text.

1. You exchange blaster fire with an opponent in turn. Unless stated in the text, YOU will fire first.
2. Roll two dice and compare to your BLASTER SKILL rating.
3. If the score is equal to or higher than it, you have missed – go to Step 9.
4. If the score is lower than it, you may have hit your target – go to Step 5.
5. Roll two dice and compare the score to your target's SKILL rating – go to Step 6.
6. If the score is equal to or above it, then you have hit the target – go to Step 8.
7. If the score is lower than it, then your target has dodged the blast – go to Step 9.
8. The target's STAMINA is reduced by 3 points. Note: if a target takes 3 consecutive hits then the STAMINA is automatically reduced to zero (death). If the target survives, go to step 9.
9. It is now your opponent's turn to fire back. Roll two dice and compare to your opponent's BLASTER SKILL rating.
10. If the score is equal to or higher than it, their shot was wide – go to Step 2.
11. If the score is lower than it, then they may have hit you – go to Step 12.
12. Roll two dice and compare the score to your SKILL rating – go to Step 13.
13. If the score is equal to or higher than it, then you have been hit – You may *Test your Luck* to alter this result. If you are lucky then the shot has missed and you may go to Step 2; otherwise go to Step 15.
14. If the score is lower than your SKILL rating, then you have managed to dodge the blast – go to Step 2.

15. Reduce your STAMINA by 3 points. Note: if you take 3 consecutive hits then your STAMINA is automatically reduced to zero (death). If you survive, go to Step 2.
16. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your opponent has been reduced to zero (death) or the text indicates otherwise to interrupt the combat.

205

Solo Ship-to-Ship Combat

Having made a note of the paragraph you have left, along with your opponent's WEAPONS SYSTEM, DEFLECTOR SHIELDS and HULL INTEGRITY ratings, follow this procedure to resolve Solo Ship-to-Ship Combat. If you emerge victorious, then return to the paragraph you just left to consult this text.

1. Ships attack each other in turn. Unless instructions are given in the text YOU will attack your opponent first.
2. Roll two dice and compare the total rolled with your WEAPONS SYSTEM rating.
3. If the roll is equal to or higher than it, then you have missed – proceed to Step 7.
4. If the total is lower than it, then your shot is on target – proceed to Step 5.
5. To determine the damage done, roll two dice again and this time add your WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to it and compare with the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating of your opponent's ship.

If the score is equal to or lower than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 2 points of damage to the ship's HULL INTEGRITY. If the score is higher than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 4 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-1 on the two-dice roll results in 1 point of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-6 on the two-dice roll results in a Direct Hit and 6 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. Note: 2 consecutive Direct Hits results in an automatic reduction to zero HULL INTEGRITY points (destruction of the ship).

6. Deduct the resulting damage from your opponent's HULL INTEGRITY rating. If your opponent's ship is still operational, go to Step 7.
7. It is now their turn to fire at you.
8. The procedure is the same, but you must use your opponent's WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to determine if their shot hits the *Starhunt*. If they miss, return to Step 2. If they are successful with their shot then proceed to Step 9.
9. To determine the damage done to your ship, roll two dice, add your opponent's WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to it and then compare the total score with the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating of the *Starhunt*.

If the score is equal to or lower than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 2 points of damage to the *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY. If the score is higher than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 4 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-1 on the two-dice roll results in 1 point of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-6 on the two-dice roll results in a Direct Hit and 6 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. Note: 2 consecutive Direct Hits will result in an automatic reduction to zero HULL INTEGRITY points (destruction of the *Starhunt*).

10. Deduct the resulting damage from the *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY rating. If the *Starhunt* is still capable of fighting back then return to Step 2.
11. The space fight continues until either ship is reduced to 0 HULL INTEGRITY points or less and explodes.

206

Multiple Ship-to-Ship Combat

Having made a note of the paragraph you have left, along with your multiple opponents' WEAPONS SYSTEM, DEFLECTOR SHIELDS and HULL INTEGRITY ratings, follow this procedure to resolve Multiple Ship-to-Ship Combat. If you successfully defeat your opponents, return to the paragraph you left to consult this text.

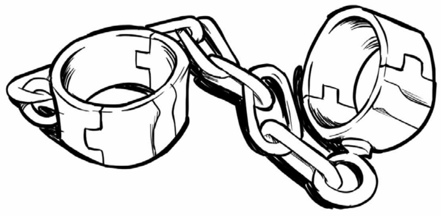
1. Ships attack each other in turn. Unless instructions are given in the text, YOU will attack your opponent first. You will fight multiple opponents in the order that they are listed in the given paragraph text.
2. Roll two dice and compare the total with your WEAPONS SYSTEM rating.
3. If the roll is equal to or higher than it, then you have missed – proceed to Step 7.
4. If the total is lower than it, then your shot is on target – proceed to Step 5.
5. To determine the damage done, roll two dice again and this time add your WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to it and compare with the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating of the designated lead ship.

If the score is equal to or lower than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 2 points of damage to the ship's HULL INTEGRITY. If the score is higher than the DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 4 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-1 on the two-dice roll results in an automatic 1 point of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-6 on the two-dice roll results in a Direct Hit and 6 points of damage. Note: 2 Direct Hits will result in an automatic reduction to 0 HULL INTEGRITY points.

6. Deduct the resulting damage from your opponent's HULL INTEGRITY rating. If opponents are reduced to just one ship, then this encounter continues as a Solo Ship-to-Ship Combat (ignore Step 12). Otherwise proceed to Step 10.
7. It is now their turn to fire back at you.
8. The procedure is the same, but you must use your opponent's WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to determine their shot aimed at the *Starhunt*. Roll two dice and compare the total with the WEAPONS SYSTEM rating of the designated lead ship.
9. If the roll is equal to or higher than the lead ship's score then it has missed. Proceed to Step 2
10. If the total is lower than it, then the lead ship is on target and you will receive damage. Proceed to Step 11.
11. To determine the damage done, roll two dice again and this time add your opponent's WEAPONS SYSTEM rating to it and compare it to your DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating.

If the score is equal to or lower than your DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 2 points of damage to the *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY rating. If the score is higher than your DEFLECTOR SHIELDS rating, the shot does 4 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-1 on the two-dice roll results in 1 point of HULL INTEGRITY damage. A double-6 on the two-dice roll results in a Direct Hit and 6 points of HULL INTEGRITY damage. Note: 2 Direct Hits will result in an automatic reduction to 0 HULL INTEGRITY points. If the *Starhunt* is still in one piece and there is more than one opponent left, proceed to Step 12. If there is only one enemy ship left, go back to Step 2.

12. You must take a single MANOEUVRABILITY test to avoid taking further damage from each opponent who did not directly fire at you (e.g. if attacked by two opponents then you make a single MANOEUVRABILITY test). Roll two dice and compare it to your MANOEUVRABILITY rating. If the score is lower than your MANOEUVRABILITY, you have successfully avoided further damage – proceed to Step 2. If the score is equal to or higher than your MANOEUVRABILITY rating, you must take an additional 2 points of damage to the *Starhunt*'s HULL INTEGRITY rating. If the *Starhunt* is still in one piece, go back to Step 2.
13. The space fight continues until either all enemy ships or you are reduced to 0 or less HULL INTEGRITY points.



You follow the beckoning figure outside into the swirling mists.

THE FACT OF FICTION

VAULT OF THE VAMPIRE

FIGHTING FANTAZINE **heads to Castle Heydrich to lift the curse, kill the evil Vampire, save the girl, and possibly learn something along the way...**

Feature by ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Werewolves were covered way back in issue #2 with our entry on *Howl of the Werewolf*, so it seems about time (some ten issues later!) to take a look at the big breakthrough of that other famous folktale monster – the Vampire. From their first appearance in *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* right through to *Vault of the Vampire*, Vampires had usually been a minor menace – an obstacle for the hero on their path to defeating the 'Big Bad' of the story. Usually they were done away with via a casual wave of some garlic or the slapdash application of Holy Water. But here, finally, the classic horror cliché of the Vampire Count and his creepy old castle is placed centre stage.

Fittingly, writer Keith Martin (more on him in the actual meat of this article) appears willing to give his Vampire villain more substance than the other recurring villain of *Fighting Fantasy*, old Zagor the Warlock. Compared to what we learn about Zagor in his first outing in *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, Martin provides the reader with a veritable mountain of background information on Reiner Heydrich in his first story, with no less than three siblings that the hero can encounter and learn things from!

But perhaps the most important legacy of this title is the porting of various pieces of Gothic horror imagery into the *Fighting Fantasy* range. Such an act would lead to other writers following suit with using such imagery to great effect, giving us titles like *Dead of Night*, *Legend of the Shadow Warriors*, *Spellbreaker*, and, of course, *Howl of the Werewolf* which is a successor to this title in more ways than one!

"The Fact of Fiction" is a series of articles designed to take a deeper look at the information presented in a *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, whether it be in-jokes, goofs, continuity with other gamebooks, the background to the creation of the book, or similar things. In many ways it is to act like a DVD commentary for the book, telling you things that you might not have already known.

Cover

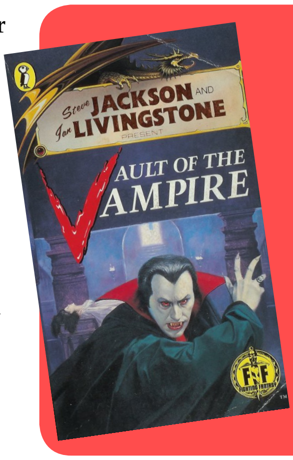
❖ In an interview published on the official website in 2002, artist Les Edwards cited this cover as his favourite out of all those he contributed to the series:

> *I can't say why exactly. It's just one of those cases where everything works the way that was intended. It's a pretty traditional Vampire but maybe that's part of it's strength. It's a simple and dramatic image and very direct. It was a big influence on Vampire paintings that I did subsequently. I remember that the publishers asked me to make the girl's breasts smaller, which I did reluctantly. I suppose this was in the days before silicone was so all-pervasive.*

Map

❖ Although no further information is given in the text, the River Bloodsedge presumably gets its name from the red, grass-like plant growing on its banks. Sedge, after all, being a word from Old English (*segge*) that means a rush or grass-like plant that grows in wet places. From its depiction in the map in this book, it is believed that the River Bloodsedge eventually flows out west and into Lake Cauldron in western Mauristatia.

❖ Jurghöfen comes in two parts. Firstly, *jurg* is Dutch for 'farmer' and is often used as a first name for males (it shares the same root meaning with the English first name



FURTHER INFORMATION

AUTHOR Keith Martin
INTERIOR ARTIST Martin McKenna
PUBLISHED March 13 1989
PUBLISHER Puffin
GAMEBOOK NUMBER 38
COVER ARTIST Les Edwards
AVAILABILITY Out of print.

George), while *höfen* is German for 'courts'. The name perhaps suggests that Jurghöfen was a place where farmers of the area came to settle disputes.

❖ Likewise with Leverhelven, *lever* is German for 'liver' and *helven* appears to be of Finnish origin, deriving from *helpi*, the Finnish name for the plant Canary Grass. But one does wonder if this is Keith Martin playing on the German word *helfen* which means 'to help'. As noted from other names in this adventure, the writer does lean heavily on German-influenced terms. Both options suggest something similar, either 'liver help' or 'liver food' (Canary Grass seed is often used as food in places like Italy and Mexico).

❖ Saarven opens with *saar*, which is the name of a river that flows from northeastern France into Germany. Meanwhile, *ven* is the German for 'vein', continuing the Vampire-linked name imagery.

❖ Pritzbad has an interesting origin. *pritz* is the Germanized short form of the Slavic personal name Pribislaw. This surname relates to a birch wood. *bad* is direct German for either a 'bath' or 'spa'. These two meanings suggest intriguing possibilities for Pritzbad.

❖ And in case it wasn't obvious, the strange glyph in the bottom right-hand corner of the map illustration is a stylised 'SL' for artist Steve Luxton.

Title Page

❖ The author of the book is listed as 'Keith Martin', which is a pseudonym for another writer (see "Buried Under the Porch").

Introduction

❖ The adventure introduces FAITH as a new stat, which is presented as purity of heart (again with the recurring theme of body imagery relating to blood) and a strong belief in the forces of good. It is interesting that none of the deities detailed in *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* (Marc Gascoigne, 1986) merit even a mention as being part of those forces. Who has the adventurer placed their faith in?

❖ The appearance of "Afflictions" in the adventure marks the first time that the player potentially beoming a Werewolf or Vampire isn't a 'sudden death' paragraph as in previous books. *Howl of the Werewolf* (Jonathan Green, 2007) would of course later develop this as a main part of the adventure narrative.

Background

❖ Femphrey first appeared on the *Fighting Fantasy* radar with the publication of *The Shamutanti Hills* (Steve Jackson, 1983). Since then it has also been the setting of *Stormslayer* (Green, 2009).

❖ Mortvania comes in two parts. The first, *mort*, translates easily from Latin as 'death'. The second is likely influenced by the fictional 'home' of Vampires, Transylvania in central Romania. The association of Transylvania with Vampires has its roots in the book *The Land Beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures, and Fancies from Transylvania* (1888) by Emily Gerard (1849-1905). This was the inspiration for Bram Stoker (1847-1912) setting his book *Dracula* (1897) there. Some of the earliest mentions of the region from the 11th century called the area "Partes Transsylvanæ" which translates as 'parts beyond the forest'. While *vania* is likely to have derived from that place name, as part of the Latin *ad vania* it can mean 'to empty', which has interesting connotations as a possible second reference to death.

❖ The inn's name, The Hart's Blood, is of course a clever play with words. A hart is a deer, the word (derived from the Old English term *heorot* for deer) used to specifically mean a red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) that is at least five years old. But as the old woman of the story illustrates, the word sounds like 'heart', another link to the main imagery of the adventure. It is interesting to note that she explains that the inn was *formerly* called The Heart's Blood, presumably before vampirism afflicted the local castle and Count. One has to wonder at the wisdom of calling the inn by that name and *not* expecting trouble to befall the area!

❖ Nastassia is a Russian name which appears to generally mean 'resurrection', the name likely a derivation of the Greek name Anastasia.

❖ Svetlana is a common Slavic female name, one which comes from the Russian term свет (*svet*), which can mean, among other things, 'pure', 'blessed' or 'holy'.

❖ For information on Count Heydrich, see "The Whole Bloody Family".

❖ Also featured here are several classic horror story clichés, especially those of gothic horrors. These include the virginal maiden, a role in this instance filled by Nastassia, the old crone (Svetlana), an inn where everyone goes silent at the asking of an innocent question (they don't take kindly to strangers in these parts!) and the fog-shrouded old castle. *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole (1717-1797) can be blamed for the castle cliché. We also have a headless horseman (for more information on this particular manifestation of horror, see "The Fact of Fiction" in issue #2).

1

The hero is beckoned to enter a waiting coach outside the inn.

❖ The coach as a means of travel is a development of the 15th century, the word itself deriving from the Hungarian post town of Kocs. From the description, this appears to be a four-in-hand coach, which is a type of coach with four horses that have the reins rigged in such a manner that it requires only one driver to control all the horses. As for the model of coach, it is probably what is known as a park drag, which was a lighter, more elegant version of the stagecoach.

2

The room opens up to reveal mosaics, wall-hangings and three other exits.

❖ The earliest currently known mosaics are those of a temple in Abra, Mesopotamia, which date back to c.3000BC. We are not told in detail what the mosaics in the room look like, but the line: "Floor mosaics and wall-hangings of plain black and red..." suggests the mosaics are likely to be geometric patterns similar to those found in excavations of Greek and Roman sites and not depictions of myths and legends, which have also appeared on Greek and Roman mosaics.

A BRAND NEW BUMPER FIGHTING FANTASY MINI ADVENTURE!
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GRAHAM BOTTLEY TALKS ABOUT THE RETURN OF AFF

■ The adventure placed =8th (out of 70), tying with *Moonrunner*, in the Fighting Fantazine 2010 survey of fan opinion, scoring a total of 79.0%. ▸

■ Until the publication of *Night of the Necromancer* by Jonathan Green in 2010, Carl Sargent (see "Buried Under the Porch" for why we aren't calling him Keith Martin!) held the top spot for number of *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks written (excluding series creators Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson). Green now ties with him for that top spot with seven titles each. Sargent's other books were *Stealer of Souls* (1988), *Master of Chaos* (1990), *Tower of Destruction* (1991), *Island of the Undead* (1992), *Night Dragon* (1993), and *Revenge of the Vampire* (1995).

■ Carl Sargent was born on December 11th, 1952 in Caerleon, Monmouthshire, Wales.

■ Sargent holds a PhD in psychology (or experimental parapsychology), which he earned in 1979. He has published several titles in this field including *Explaining the Unexplained: Mysteries of the Paranormal* which he co-wrote with fellow psychologist Hans Eysenck.

5

Upon crossing a pentagram, a Demon Steed appears in smoke and fire.

❖ The pentagram is a long-established occult symbol. The earliest appearance of the pentagram (a five-pointed star made up of five lines) dates from around 3000BC, where they appear in Mesopotamian writings. While the pentagram has been used as a religious symbol by various groups over many centuries, including the Bahá'í Faith, Heinrich von Nettesheim (1486-1535) and others of his generation popularised the use of the pentagram as a magical symbol. By the mid-19th century it had evolved both separate good and evil meanings, dependent on in which direction the points of the pentagram were orientated. More recently it has been adopted as the religious symbol of many Wiccans.

❖ The imagery of the Demon Steed probably has its origins in things like the Wild Hunt of European folklore. One English account from 1127, as recorded in the *Peterborough Chronicle* (one of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*), describes the riders and horses thus: "The huntsmen were black, huge, and hideous, and rode on black horses and on black he-goats, and their hounds were jet black, with eyes like saucers, and horrible." (translation: Garmonsway, G.N. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*)

7

Caught by moonlight, the hero begins transforming into a Werewolf.

❖ Moonlight as a trigger for a transformation into a Werewolf comes from two folk traditions. In parts of France, Germany, and Italy, sleeping outside on a summer night on a Wednesday or Friday with the light of a full moon shining on the face was enough to change a person into a Werewolf. In Hungary and the Balkans the transformation would usually occur at the Winter solstice, Easter and the full moon. *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* (1847) by G.W.M. Reynolds (1814-1879) helped establish the modern version of the idea that a full moon was the cause of the transformation, as is seen in most subsequent Werewolf fiction.

8

Using a key to open the lock, the hero ventures inside only to meet a ghost.

❖ Referred to as a crypt (at 326), from the Greek κρύπτη (*kryptē*) meaning 'concealed' or 'private', the burial place of the Heydrich family is clearly within the bounds of the castle. However, what is not clear is if it is a free-standing structure within the courtyard or a part of the castle proper. This is an important distinction as a crypt is a room *below* a building, typically the apse of a church. It is likely that Martin is drawing on the imagery of the 19th century trend for building burial vaults on family estates, which suggests that the structure here is apart from the castle. Interestingly, the Heydrich family *also* have a mausoleum *inside* the castle itself (see 255 for why this is so odd).

9

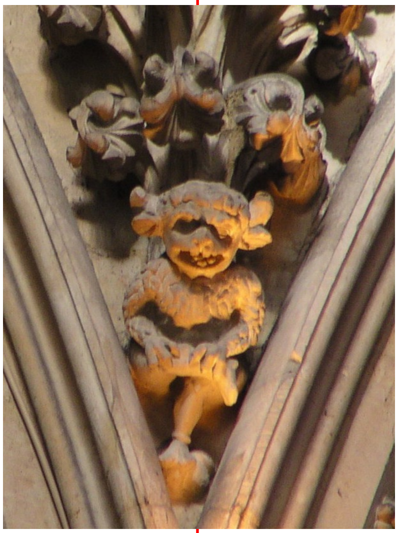
The hero has a brief chat with a small winged creature.

❖ Homunculus is Latin for 'little man' and stems from alchemical writings of the 16th century, although these texts may have been influenced by earlier folklore. In general, the writings of Paracelsus (Philippus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541) are the first appearance of the term 'homunculus', cropping up in *De natura rerum* (1537) where Paracelsus states:

> *That the sperm of a man ... will look somewhat like a man, but transparent, without a body. [If] it be fed wisely with the Arcanum of human blood ... a living human child grows therefrom, with all its members like another child, which is born of a woman, but much smaller.* (translation: Grafton, Anthony. *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*)

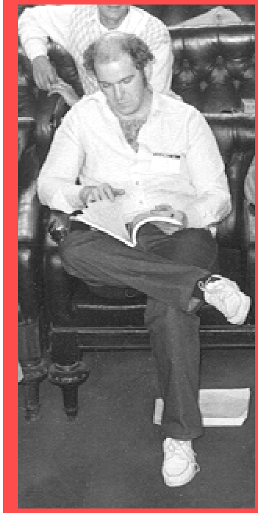
Homunculi later appeared in *Island of the Undead* (1992), which was also by Martin.

❖ Oddly, the depiction of the homunculus in the illustration for paragraph 351 makes the creature appear closer to an Imp. Imps originate from German folklore, but one famous example of an Imp is the Lincoln Imp found in the cathedral in Lincoln, England. The story goes, according to a 14th century tale, that two Imps came to cause mayhem on Earth and after causing problems in northern England, headed for Lincoln Cathedral. Here they smashed things and attacked the Bishop before an angel emerged from a book of hymns and ordered them to stop. One did and was allowed to escape, but the other continued to attack and was turned to stone by the angel. Pictured here is the Imp as depicted on the interior of Lincoln Cathedral. Imps have also appeared in, among others, *The Dark Chronicles of Anakendis* (Andrew Whitworth, 1985), *Trial of Champions* (Livingstone, 1986), and *Spellbreaker* (Green, 1993).



BURIED UNDER THE PORCH

As the case with fellow writer Luke Sharp (pointed out way back in "The Fact of Fiction" in issue #3), Keith Martin is believed to be a pseudonym for another writer. The question is, 'who?'



The leading (and probably the only contender) for Martin's real identity is Carl Sargent (pictured left at Cambridge in the 1970s), co-writer of the four *Zagor Chronicles* (1993-94) novels with Ian Livingstone. Unlike with Sharp, there hasn't been a lucky slip-up with copyrights (as per Alkis Alkaviades being fingered on the copyright page of *Fangs of Fury* (1989)), so fans have had to amass evidence more indirectly.

Fellow writer Paul Mason appears to have been the impetus for fans to look closer at Keith Martin, commenting in a post to The Gamebooks List Yahoo! group on May 21st, 2001: *I hold to my belief that 'Keith Martin' was a pseudonym for Carl Sargent.*[1] Fan Simon Osborne then noted on the same group on September 12th, 2007 that: *on page 13 of* Dungeon *magazine #15 it says: "Carl Sargent has just finished a third fantasy gamebook, for 1989 publication."*[2] This was concluded to be a reference to *Master of Chaos*, which was published in early 1990.

Other evidence included the similarity between material in the *Zagor Chronicles* and some of Martin's *Fighting Fantasy* adventures. These include, but aren't limited to, large amounts of herbal brandy, a ranger with a brown bear for a companion (see 64 for the example from *Vault of the Vampire*), and comments on the restricted distribution of Dark Elves throughout Titan.

Sadly, Sargent disappeared from the games industry sometime around 2000 and does not seems to be in contact with anyone from that arena. As such, we have been unable to track him down to ask whether or not he *is* Keith Martin...

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[1] http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gamebooks/message/2788

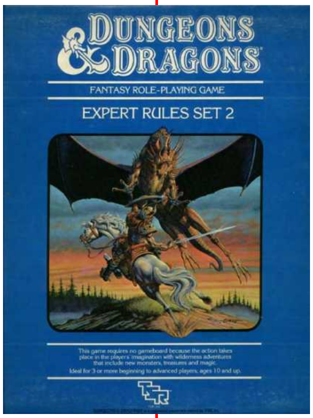
[2] http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gamebooks/message/8893

10
Using the pommel of their sword, the hero destroys one of Reiner's coffins.

❖ 'Coffin' comes from the Greek κόφινος (*kophinos*), which means 'basket'. The idea that a Vampire has to sleep in their coffin in their native soil was codified by Stoker's *Dracula*, where the Vampire's earth is transported from Transylvania to England via ship.

22
The hero encounters a Major Thassaloss and is forced to fight.

❖ The Thassaloss (both Major and Minor) appears to come from the world of the *Dungeons & Dragons Expert Set* (first released in 1981), where they were simply called Bone Golems. The term 'Thassaloss' seems to have been developed for the *World of Greyhawk*, which is a campaign setting for the role-playing game. Given that Martin (as Carl Sargent) wrote modules for this campaign setting, it is unsurprising that his *Fighting Fantasy* books were influenced by it.



23
Unfortunately the holy water has no effect on Katarina as she isn't a Vampire.

❖ Holy Water is water sanctified by a priest for use in baptism, the blessing of a person, or the repulsion of evil forces. This last one is a general ability when it comes to fictional monsters and isn't restricted to working on just Vampires.

25
The hero searches Lothar's room and comes up with a couple of items.

❖ Lothar is the Old High German form of Chlothar, which combines *hlut*, meaning 'loud', and *heri* which means 'army' or 'warrior'.

❖ Lothar is castellan of Castle Heydrich. This term, which refers to the governor of a castle, is derived from the Latin *Castellanus*, which in turn comes from *castellum* or 'castle'. The position means that Lothar was in charge of running the domestic staff (like the Zombies in the kitchen!) and the defence of the castle, especially when the resident lord of the castle is absent.

❖ Among the items in Lothar's room is a silvered stake. In European folklore, for a stake to be fatal to a Vampire it had to be fashioned from the wood of an ash, hawthorn, or oak tree. In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* it is specified as white oak.

❖ The stake is interesting for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the Vampires of European folklore and Bram Stoker's novel *weren't* affected by silver, so Martin is likely drawing on the Vampires of *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974), which *are* vulnerable to silver. Secondly one has to assume that Lothar believes that Katarina is a Vampire, otherwise why would he be plotting to use the silvered stake to kill her?

33
As the hero enters the bell tower bats begin swarming at their face.

❖ The fact that Castle Heydrich has a bell tower is intriguing, as they have been traditionally a feature of religious sites as a call to worship or as a means of signalling special events such as weddings. Does the existence of such a tower in the castle mean that at some prior point in its existence the castle was a religious centre of some kind?

36
The hero attempts to haggle with the alchemist Karl-Heinz.

❖ Karl-Heinz Matthaus the alchemist has three parts to his name. Karl means 'free man' or 'strong', while Heinz is 'ruler of the estate'. Matthaus, meanwhile, is based on the Hebrew name Matthew which means 'gift of God'. One has wonder if Martin got the name for this character from the well-known German football players Lothar Matthäus (b.1961) and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (b.1955), who had both already played in two World Cups (1982 & 1986) by this point.

❖ Alchemy is a philosophical tradition in which, historically, its practitioners aimed to achieve one or more of the following goals: the creation of a philosopher's stone; the ability to transform base metals into the noble metals (gold or silver); and development of an elixir of life. Western alchemy (as opposed to the concurrent strands of alchemy that existed in India and China) is recognized as a protoscience that contributed to the development of modern chemistry and medicine. However, the major point that differentiates alchemy from modern science is its inclusion of Hermetic principles and practices related to mythology, magic, religion, and spirituality. In a world like Titan, where gods and various other magical beings exist, we have to wonder how greatly increased Karl-Heinz's chances are of achieving his goals.

❖ As Katarina is 76, but looks to be in her late-20s/early-30s, we can assume that Karl-Heinz (as creator of the potions that keep her looking young, and as someone seeking longevity himself) has been the alchemist-in-residence for at least forty years.

37
The organ is making a great noise and the hero struggles to stop it.

❖ The pipe organ can be traced back in time to the hydraulis (ὕδραυλις), a water-driven pipe organ developed by the Greeks. It is attributed to the 3rd century BC engineer Ctesibius of Alexandria and was used in arenas in the Roman Empire. The water pumps were replaced by an inflated leather bag in the 2nd century AD and the use of bellows to create the desired air pressure came about in the 6th or 7th century AD.

40
The hero finds themselves under attack from a ferocious dog.

❖ It is generally thought that the mastiff dog was introduced to England by the Normans, although some contend that the Pugnaces Britanniae (the name given by the Romans to the war dogs of the Britons) may also be a genetic ancestor of the mastiff. Amusingly, while the dogs were in the past used in blood-sports such as dog fighting and bear-baiting (until such activities were outlawed), the breed is better known for its docile and good-natured temperament – something of a contrast to how the one here behaves! Mastiffs reappear in *Spellbreaker* and *Howl of the Werewolf*.

44
The attacking Wraith is repelled by the hero's FAITH.

❖ 'Wraith' is a Scottish term for a ghost, one that has an obscured origin. The modern Wraith of fantasy fiction owes itself to this origin in that J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973) favoured an etymology for the word that associated it with the verb 'writhe' and thus the Ringwraiths of *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) were born. These in turn influenced the Wraiths of the original *Dungeons & Dragons*, where they were described as high-class Wights (see "The Fact of Fiction" in issue #6) with better mobility. The *Fighting Fantasy* version borrows from this heritage and Wraiths have appeared in many adventures, including (but not limited to) *Phantoms of Fear* (Robin Waterfield, 1987), *Night Dragon* (Keith Martin, 1993), and *Bloodbones* (Green, 2006).

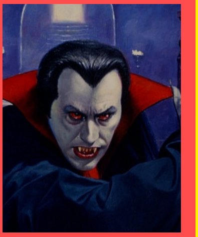
45
Entering the living-room the hero is soon attacked by a Vampire Bat and a Weasel.

❖ The weasel here is probably the Least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), the smallest of the many weasel families. In several cultures, such as Greek, German, and Japanese, the weasel was considered to be a sigh of bad luck or ill omen. Weasels don't usually crop up as enemies to fight in *Fighting Fantasy* titles, but have rated a mention or two in books such as *Phantoms of Fear*, and *Knights of Doom* (Green, 1994).

THE WHOLE BLOODY FAMILY

Time for a look at the family to whom the castle belongs, the Heydrich family. The player can encounter five members of the family in the course of *Vault of the Vampire*. and another gets a mention.

Count Reiner Heydrich



❖ Reiner Heydrich, the reigning count, is named after Reinhard Heydrich (1904-1942), the German Nazi officer who was a member of the SS, the Gestapo, and involved in the planning of the Final Solution for the deportation and execution of all Jews in German-occupied territory (see photo below). He was assassinated in 1942 by the Czechoslovakian government-in-exile.

❖ The portraits on the wall of the room where one of his coffins is kept (paragraph 382) demonstrate that he is not the first of the Heydrich family to fall victim to vampirisim (see Eckhart Heydrich), perhaps suggesting the possibility of a curse on the family.

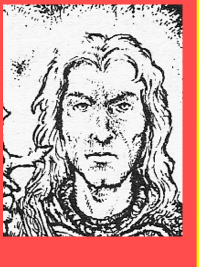
❖ Reiner is derived from the Old German name *Rainer*, which means 'judgement warrior'.

❖ Reiner's whole look, with widow's peak hairstyle and other clichés, draws on two sources. The first is from the vampire Lord Ruthven from *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori (1795-1821), which set the idea of a sophisticated and charming Vampire. The second was Béla Lugosi's (1882-1965) portrayal of Dracula in the 1931 film adaptation of Bram Stoker's book, where his Hungarian accent, hairstyle, fashions, and sweeping gestures set the tone for subsequent Vampire films and are now seen as staples associated with Dracula.

Reinhard Heydrich: © Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1969-054-16 / Hoffmann, Heinrich / CC-BY-SA, 2013 Used under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Germany License

❖ The letters discovered by the hero at 130 suggest that Reiner has spies among the general populace of Mauristatia. Could it be that the plans seen in *Revenge of the Vampire* were already underway?

Siegfried Heydrich

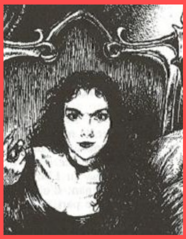


❖ Siegfried is another Germanic first name, which comes in two parts. The *sig* part means 'victory' and the *frithu*-derived second part means 'protection'. Given the symbolism on display in the book, this is an appropriate name. Siegfried's sword *Nightstar* gives the reader the means for victory over Heydrich and his armour provides protection during battles.

❖ Thanks to the plaque guarding his armour, we know that Seigfried was referred to as 'the Valiant One'.

❖ Interestingly, the depiction of Siegfried in the illustration for paragraph 280 gives him a shield with what appears to be the English flag! In the context of Titan is this symbol meant to represent Mauristatia, Mortvania, or the Heydrich family itself? In *The Tasks of Tantalon* (Jackson, 1985) a knight of Gallantaria is shown with a shield of blue with white diagonal stripes and seven (possibly eight due to the placement of a sword) gold stars. So the likely answer is that the white with red cross are the colours of Mauristatia.

Katarina Heydrich



❖ Sister of Siegfried and Reiner, Katarina has a Germanic name (also used in parts of Eastern Europe) based on the Greek name Αικατερίνη (*Aikaterinē*), from which the English name Katherine is also derived. The origin and meaning of the name is unknown, with the earliest use of the Greek name being Saint Catherine of Alexandria (c.282-c.305 AD). The name has since taken on the meaning of the Greek term καθαρός (*katharos*) which means 'pure'. This is amusing as events in the book prove that Katarina Heydrich is anything *but* pure!

❖ Jandor, the young wizard the hero encounters as a ghost, identifies herself as one of Katarina's victims, which brings us to the interesting question of how long Count Reiner Heydrich has ruled the area. The text tells us that Katarina's true appearance is that of the wizened old crone we see at the successful end of the story and that she is 76, meaning the people of the surrounding lands *may* have been under an evil thumb for a lot longer than initially thought. *If* we assume that Reiner is a couple of years older than Katarina (perhaps 78) and became a Vampire in his early 20s as a disenfranchised youth, then he has ruled the area for nearly sixty years. As Gunthar's only signs of age are greying hair and being 'middle-aged' we could perhaps assume that Gunthar's healing magics have allowed him to age more gracefully if he is really around 74 years in age (assuming he is the youngest of the four siblings). Meanwhile, Wilhelm's youthful looks could simply be the result of being a much younger cousin.

Gunthar Heydrich

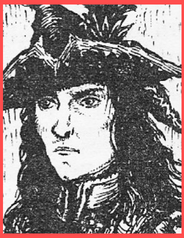
❖ Given that Siegfried was the older brother of Reiner, it is safe to assume that Gunthar is the youngest brother of the three.

❖ Gunthar is a German first name which means 'warrior', a contrast to his profession as a healer.

❖ We learn that he is able to do magic, but his sister Katarina would be alerted if he used his magic and also has some way of punishing him for using it that he is unable to resist.

❖ His carrying of a crucifix (see "The Fact of Fiction" in issue #6 for more on this), white robes and unwillingness to kill even his evil Vampire, older brother Reiner, suggests that Gunthar is a member of some sort of religious order.

Wilhelm Heydrich



❖ Wilhelm, a cousin of Count Heydrich, has a name that is the Germanic version of William, the name meaning 'will' and 'helmet' or 'protection'.

❖ At 230 he is referred to as *Count* Wilhelm Heydrich (my emphasis), which suggests a couple of possibilities. The first is that Wilhelm was given the title of Count for special services rendered by someone of greater rank, which raises the question of who! The second is that the Mauristatian region follows the practise of some European countries in that *all* sons of a Count could hold the title of Count. This would mean that Wilhelm's father and Reiner's (brothers to each other) *both* were Counts. This would mean that Gunthar *is also* a Count!

❖ Dressing Wilhelm in a way that reflects Napoléon (see 240) is now a shorthand way for indicating that someone is suffering from a grandiose delusion brought on by schizophrenia, believing themselves to be God, Jesus, or, in this case, Napoléon. This method of indicating insanity is now a well-established trope in a variety of media, appearing in such things as the *Futurama* (1999-2003, 2008-2013) television series episode 'Insane in the Mainframe', the comic book *Le Combat des chefs* (known in English as *Astérix and the Big Fight*) (1964, translated into English in 1971), and the 1922 Stan Laurel (1890-1965) film *Mixed Nuts* among many, many other examples.

Eckhart Heydrich

❖ Is this where the rot set in? The current Count's great-great-grandfather is referred to in a text on the history of Mortvania as someone that 'folke saye he is Vampyre.'

❖ From this we can establish that the castle has been in the Heydrich family's hands for at least five generations.

❖ Bats have long been associated with the supernatural and omens; in the English heraldic tradition they represent the 'awareness of the powers of darkness and chaos'. Vampire Bats only began to be associated more closely with Vampire folklore after the discovery of Vampire Bats on the South American mainland in the 16th century. Vampire Bats are first mentioned in folklore in 1734 and the name 'Vampire Bat' wasn't used as a zoological term till 1774. There are three species of Vampire Bat: the common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*), the hairy-legged vampire bat (*Diphylla ecaudata*) and the white-winged vampire bat (*Diaemus youngi*), which makes the Horned Vampire Bat seen here an invention of the author. Vampire Bats also turn up in *Chasms of Malice* (Luke Sharp, 1987), *Deathmoor* (Waterfield, 1995), and *Eye of the Dragon* (Livingstone, 2005) among others.

50

The hero is unable to find a way into the castle other than the main gate.

❖ Arrow-slits as mentioned here are generally attributed to Archimedes (c. 287-c. 212BC), as a creation during the siege of Syracuse, which took place in 214-212BC. Although they appeared in Greek and Roman defences, later Norman designs didn't feature them and they were only reintroduced towards the end of the 12th century.

53

The white wine the hero tries turns out to be a crisp, cool drink.

❖ Chardonnay is a green-skinned grape variety from the Burgundy wine region of eastern France. Modern DNA evidence suggests that the variety was brought to France from Croatia by the Romans. Given the general ease of cultivating Chardonnay, thanks to its ability to adapt to different conditions, the existence of the wine made from its grapes in the Old World doesn't bring us any closer to being able to fix a point of origin in Titan. However, given the extremely mountainous nature of Mauristatia, it is probable that the vineyards that produce this wine (Mauristatia Chardonnay) are located on the edges of the region near the border with other areas.

54

The door opens to reveal a Wolf pen with two Wolves inside.

❖ The animals here are likely to be based on the Grey Wolf that previously roamed much of Europe. During the Middle Ages an effort was made in Europe to exterminate much of the Grey Wolf population, with it being made extinct in England by the early 16th century. Other countries followed suit with no wolves in Denmark after 1772, Sweden's last wolf killed in 1966, and Norway's in 1973. Despite Nazi Germany being the first country to offer the wolf protected status in 1934, the Grey Wolf was already extinct in the Rhine regions by 1899. Grey Wolves specifically also appear in *The Warrior's Way* (Andrew Chapman & Martin Allen, 1986), *Scorpion Swamp* (Steve Jackson (US), 1984), and *Howl of the Werewolf*.

61

The hero is told where they can locate a weapon to fight Reiner with.

❖ Adolf is a Germanic name that is derived from the Old High German name Athalwolf, itself a compound word by combining *athal*, or *adal*, meaning 'noble', and *wolf*. Although it was once a popular name, due to the stigma of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) it is rarely used as a first name any longer. Even the French and Italian versions of the name, Adolphe and Adolfo respectively, have fallen from favour in their countries.

64

Valderesse abuses the Gnome in order to get the hero across the river.

❖ Valderesse the ranger is a name befitting her occupation. Valder is a Dutch topographical-based name for someone who lives in a forest or woods. The '-esse' on the end creates a feminine version of the word.

75

The Sage moans about money and the hero realises they will have to pay up.

❖ Here we have Doktor Karl Adenauer, a sage. Adenauer is probably named after Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), the first post-war Chancellor of West Germany (1949-1963) who formed the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and rebuilt Germany after the effects of the Second World War (1939-1945).

❖ A sage, a wise older man, is seen as an archetype by psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961), a universal prototype of an idea which can be used to interpret observations. A sage is also something of a stock character in fantastical fiction, often portrayed as a wizard or something set apart from humanity in some way such as the half-human Merlin. Other notable sage-like characters from myth and legend include Chiron from *The Iliad* (reputedly by Homer (ca. 8th century BC) and written somewhere between 960-710BC), Odin of Norse mythology, and Utnapishtim from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (the earliest fragments of which date from around 2150-2000 BC).

77

The hero fights it out with the forester, who is a capable opponent.

❖ In medieval times a forester was akin to a local sheriff or law enforcer. Their primary responsibility was patrolling the woodlands or forests that belonged to their employer, who was usually a noble or lord. This suggests that Barandrun the forester is in the employ of Count Heydrich, which would explain why he knows Lothar, as it would be the castellan's job to oversee such employees.

❖ Given what we know of Lothar's plans to strike at Katarina, we could infer from Barandrun's comment of not having seen him in some months that this is how long Lothar's plan has been waiting for the right moment (something that is reinforced by Katarina's comments in paragraph 119).

78

While searching the room, the hero is attacked by a raven.

❖ The Raven seen here is likely based on the Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) widely found across the northern hemisphere. Ravens appear in the mythology of many cultures due to their nature as carrion eaters, often seen as having some link to death and the afterlife. In Greek mythology they were a symbol of good luck and were the messengers of the gods in the mortal realm. In Irish mythology they are associated with warfare and the goddess An Morrígan, while in England there is the legend that the Kingdom of England would fall if the Ravens of the Tower of London were removed. A Giant Raven appears again in this books sequel, *Revenge of the Vampire* (Martin, 1995), while regular Ravens also appear in *Dead of Night* (Jim Bambra & Stephen Hand, 1989) and *Knights of Doom* among others.

97

Count Heydrich transforms into a bat after mocking the hero and flies away.

❖ The ability to turn into other creatures has been a power associated with Vampires for some time. Revenants, seen as the folklore predecessor of the Vampire, had the ability to change shape and in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, not only is Count Dracula able to become a Wolf, a Bat, and fog, he is also able to impersonate Jonathan Harker, one of the main characters of the book.

114

The hero enters a room filled with many things, one of which attacks.

❖ 'Objets d'art' is a French term used for works of art that are not paintings, large- or medium-sized sculptures, prints or drawings. Despite these exclusions, the definition is fairly flexible, with the bulk of such items being small, three-dimensional objects finished with decorative arts. It does often also include things such as small clocks, watches, gold boxes, and sometimes textiles, especially tapestries.

❖ Meanwhile, Wood Golems (see "The fact of Fiction" in issue #2 for more on Golems in general) have also appeared in *The Shamutanti Hills* (Jackson, 1983) and *Midnight Rogue* (Graeme Davis, 1987).

118

In a room filled with a variety of strange equipment, the hero meets Karl-Heinz.

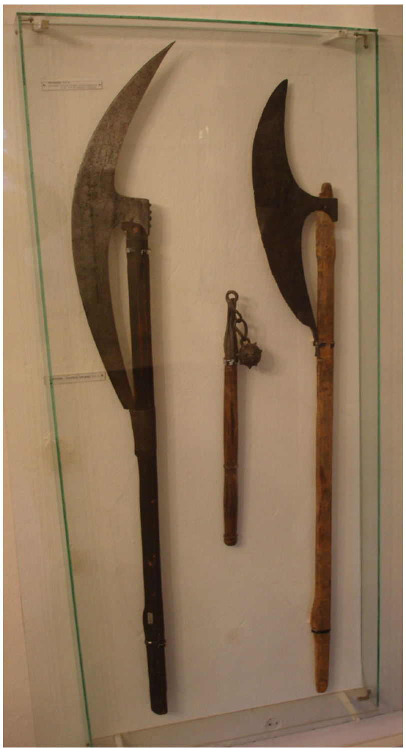
❖ Pince-nez glasses take their name from the way they support themselves without earpieces by pinching the bridge of the wearer's nose. It uses the French words *pincer*, 'to pinch', and *nez*, 'nose'. While such glasses existed as early as the 15th century, they became a fashionable item of eye-wear in the 19th century after the development of modern versions in the 1840s.

123

The hero examines the plaque on the chest before trying to open it.

❖ What we have here with the plaque is a type of cryptography, which must be distinguished from code which is where one word simply stands for another. Encryption results in turning the original text ('plaintext') into something unintelligible ('ciphertext'). What is presented here is known as a substitution cipher, where the letters of the plaintext are replaced by other letters but their position in the ciphertext remains the same as in the plaintext.

❖ Sadly there is an error with the transcription of the plaque here, with the first word reading 'Gfgfho' instead of 'Gfqfho'. This was corrected by the time of the fifth reprinting of the book. Of note, the illustration that accompanies the paragraph seems to be accurate with a 'q' instead of the erroneous 'g'.



126

A chat with the forester leads to the hero being given a gift of garlic.

❖ The idea that garlic has an effect on Vampires comes from the various folklores of Europe, either as a means of warding off a vampire (such as crushed garlic spread over entrances to a home) or destroying a Vampire (placing garlic in a sleeping Vampire's mouth). It has been suggested that the origin of garlic as an apotropaic (a magical item that wards off evil) for Vampires is the connection with rabies. Those with rabies suffer from hypersensitivity and the smell of garlic is sometimes enough to drive off normal people, let alone those dealing with hypersensitivity!

128

A dusty old room contains a suit of armour which attacks the hero.

❖ A bardiche (see photo) is a weapon from eastern Europe. Developed from the sparth (a medieval Danish axe), manuscripts depict the weapon, a type of glaive polearm, as early as c.1250AD and by the 16th century the bardiche had become a weapon associated with streltsy (the Russian guardsmen who were armed with firearms).

148

On the path through the forest the hero runs into a bear and a figure with a bow.

❖ The Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) is found across much of North America and Eurasia and as of 2005, 16 different subspecies have been recognised, including the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) of the Americas.

❖ Brown Bears specifically (but also including Grizzlies), also appear in *The Forest of Doom* (Livingstone, 1983), and *Portal of Evil* (Peter Darvill-Evans, 1989).

150

An undead creature, the Baobhan Sith, attacks the hero.

❖ The Baobhan Sith is a Vampire from Scottish mythology, similar to the Banshee of Irish folklore. The Sith is a beautiful woman in a green dress and they can usually be found operating in groups to entice and trap unwary travellers through dance and seduction. Given that this particular Sith is alone and restrained by a mesh of cobwebs that fall away when she attacks, the room is most certainly a trap. But it does beg the question of why the Sith is alone. Are there other Sith in other places in the castle?

151

Wilhelm is in a lucid, talkative mood and tells the hero several things.

❖ In a follow-up to the Mauristatia Chardonnay of 53 (the paragraph, not the year!), we have an Analandian sherry. As Analand is the first region south of Mauristatia, it makes sense that Mauristatia's citizens have access to a drink such as this.

❖ Sherry is a fortified wine made from white grapes. In particular, grapes from near the town of Jerez de la Frontera in Andalusia, Spain, with the term 'sherry' being an anglicisation of Jerez. Since 1934 'sherry' has been recognised in Spain as a term that can only be used to describe fortified wine products from the triangular area of the province of Cádiz between Jerez, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and El Puerto de Santa María. The EU later extended the power of this distinction so that in Europe fortified wines *not* from that region cannot identify themselves as a sherry.

❖ The idiom 'living daylights' is believed to have its origins in 18th century slang referring to someone's eyes, with the earliest recorded reference to the saying coming in Henry Feilding's (1707-1754) novel *Amelia* (1752). Here, one character refers to attacking another to 'darken her daylights' (ie. cause her to close her eyes in unconsciousness).

157

Moving along a corridor, the hero comes across two doors with plaques on them.

❖ Here we have the tombs of Chancellor Conrad Schmidt and Boris the Drunkard. One has to assume that since they are buried here within the castle with plaques to mark their tombs, there is a good chance that they are related to the Heydrich family in some way.

❖ A Chancellor is a title used for a variety of important positions from government to education and religion. For example, a Chancellor can be a head of state such as the Chancellor of Germany (currently Angela Merkel (b.1954)), or the head of an educational institute such as a university (Prince Philip (b.1921) was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge for 36 years (1976-2011)).

❖ The term comes from *cancellarius*, a position of porter in the Roman courts of justice. That in turn comes from *cancelli*, the lattice-work placed on windows or doors (next to which the cancellarius would stand when on duty).

❖ For the meaning behind the name Conrad and why it fitted his occupation, see "The Fact of Fiction" in issue #2. Meanwhile, Schmidt is the German equivalent of the English surname Smith, with both meaning a blacksmith or metalworker.

❖ Boris is a name with Bulgarian origins, although the meaning is disputed. The earliest surviving written record of a Boris is Boris I (d.907AD) who was ruler of the First Bulgarian Empire (852 to his abdication in 889 to become a monk).

183
The hero is given instructions by Karl-Heinz and then told to leave.

❖ Squid ink was once used by people as an ink for writing with. These days the ink is used for colouring and flavouring in cooking. Given recent discoveries that suggest squid ink might be useful in fighting tumour cells, one could speculate that Karl-Heinz is interested in the ink for the potions he makes for Katarina or his planned longevity potion.

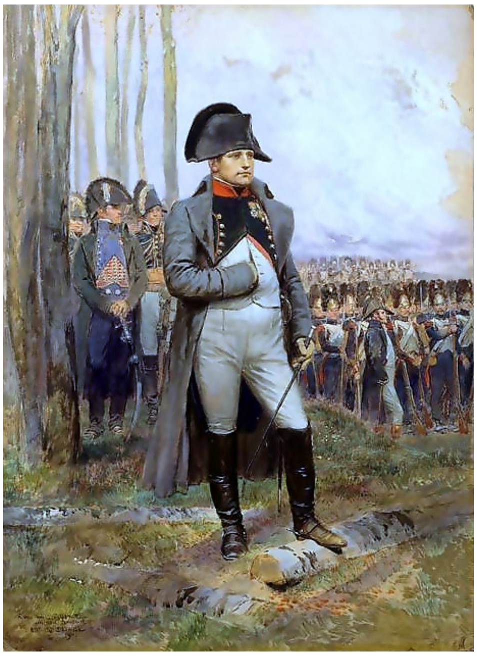
187
While crossing the river, something in the water attacks the hero.

❖ River Snakes presumably are analogous to Water Snakes, of which several types exist in real life. Most likely Martin was thinking of the *Nerodia* genus of snakes found mainly in the northern Americas. These snakes are non-venomous and while their first instinct on being disturbed is to flee, they have a nasty disposition and are prone to striking or biting. Water Snakes also appear in *Masks of Mayhem* (Waterfield, 1986).

240
The hero enters a room to find a man marching up and down.

❖ Wilhelm is dressed in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Napoléon Bonaparte (1769-1821), complete with tricorne hat and hand resting inside his waistcoat. See "The Whole Bloody Family" for why he is depicted this way.

❖ The hat Wilhelm wears is known as a tricorne, which is somewhat odd as the hat favoured by Napoléon was the one descended from the tricorne – the bicorne (see the painting to the right). The bicorne was adopted as part of uniforms for military and naval officers of Europe and America during the 1790s. From c.1800 onwards it was worn in the 'fore-and-aft' manner rather than the earlier side-to-side style as worn by Wilhelm. The bicorne began to fall out of favour with the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918) and had all but disappeared by World War II. The tricorne meanwhile, had become popular in the 17th century and thanks to King Louis XIV (1638-1715), had become an item of civilian clothing as well as military. While the bicorne replaced it in the armies and navies, the top hat replaced it in civilian life.



Napoleon in 1806: Édouard Detaille

255
The room is filled with all manner of disturbing items.

❖ The room is referred to in the text as a mausoleum, but a mausoleum is an external, free-standing building that wouldn't be a part of a larger structure! Arguably the most famous mausoleum in the world is the Taj Mahal (building the structure took place from 1632 through to 1648, with the gardens and surrounds completed five years later).

258
The hero knocks on the door and enters the room.

❖ Given the description in the text here, it seems likely that the illustration that accompanies 185 was actually originally meant to go here!

280
The ghost of Siegfried appears before the hero.

❖ Mikhail is the Russian form of Michael, a given name from Hebrew which means 'Who is like God?' and which first appears in *The Bible* in Numbers 13:13.

❖ Mikhail is described as a vassal of Siegfried, which means that at some point he had sworn to supply Siegfried with military support. It is likely that Mikhail was a knight who had no land holdings of his own.

305
The hero examines the room and the paintings of Reiner and Katarina.

❖ Given what we know of the family (see "The Whole Bloody Family"), this room raises a couple of questions. That Reiner seems to hate his dead, older brother Siegfried is a given thanks to the defaced portrait here and the removal of the plaque to his tomb elsewhere. However, why is there no painting of the third brother, Gunthar (or even a defaced placeholder as with Siegfried)? If he killed and hates his older brother, why does Reiner allow the ruined painting to remain and why did he allow a plaque to be put on Siegfried's tomb or even allow him to be buried in the crypt in the first place?

306
The bottle turns out to contain a very good brandy.

❖ Another drink (see 53 and 151), this time a brandy. The name comes from the older term 'brandywine', itself a derivation of the Dutch word *brandewijn*, which means 'burnt wine'. Brandy as it is known today, a spirit made from distilling wine, originates from the 12th century and became popular in the 14th. It is likely that this here is a grape variety of brandy, the most popular form (the other two are fruit brandy and pomace brandy). The most famous type of brandy is, arguably, Cognac brandy from the Cognac region of France. Like Sherry and Chardonnay mentioned earlier, the EU enforces a restriction on the use of this name. Cognac as a label is for the exclusive use of those brandies made in the Cognac area.

313
The hero is interupted in searching the room by the appearance of a blob.

❖ Doktor Pieter Fauster, Physician, has an interesting name. To begin with, Pieter is the Dutch version of the first name Peter, which means 'rock'. This comes from the Greek πέτρος (*petros*). Secondly, the surname Fauster is likely to be based on Faust, a character from German legend. In the tale, Faust makes a bargain with Mephistopheles, a representative of the Devil. In exchange for Mephistopheles serving Faust with knowledge and powers for 24 years, the Devil gets to claim Faust's soul at the end of that period. An important German retelling of this story is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) 1808 play *Faust*. In the English language the most notable version is the play *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (published in 1604 and performed as early as 1594) by Christopher Marlowe (1564~1593).

❖ We could possibly argue that Count Heydrich played the part of Mephistopheles to Doktor Fauster's Faust, which makes his final end as a Necrotic Jelly the equivalent of the tale's original ending in which Faust suffers in the fires of hell.

❖ The Blob is an obvious source to reach for when talking about the appearance of the Necrotic Jelly, the Blob being the creature from the eponymous film of 1958. The timing was pertinent too, with a remake with the same title having been released in 1988.

350
The hero dons Siegfried's chainmail armour.

❖ An error here with the stats adjustments. The line should read: "...if your SKILL score was 12, your SKILL score is now a full 13..."

LIBROGAME:

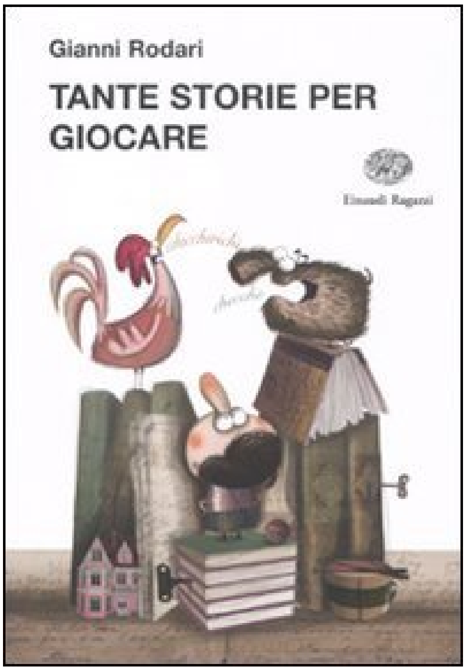
The Chimeric Italian Passion for Gamebooks

by ALESSANDRO VIOLA

The first interactive novel published in Italian was *Tante storie per giocare* ("Many stories for playing") by Gianni Rodari (1920~1980), who remains one of the most important and famous Italian authors of literature for young readers.

At the time it was published, in 1971, it was a revolutionary book that broke the "rule" that every story had to have its own, singular, ending; it is in fact a collection of stories where each one has three different endings and in the last chapter the author comments on them, suggesting in some cases that the reader could write his or her own ending.

This book is considered to be so iconic, visionary and with such a high literary value that it is mentioned by most modern Italian literature textbooks and as such, probably nobody felt courageous enough to continue experimenting in that direction. It remains a singular, although bright, experiment.


Gianni Rodari
TANTE STORIE PER GIOCARE
Einaudi Ragazzi

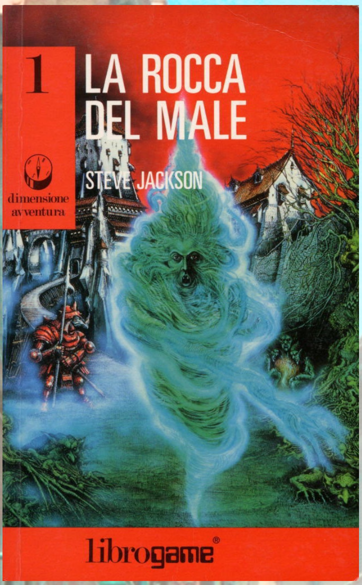
EARLY EFFORTS

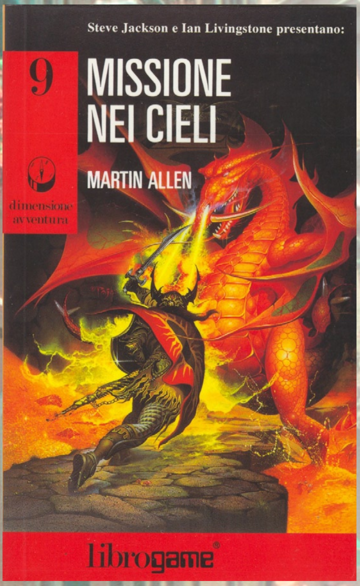
In 1982 Puffin published the first *Fighting Fantasy* book by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone at time when the worldwide mainstream public was familiar with the fantasy worlds of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Dungeons & Dragons*.

In Italy at this time, English was not a very popular language and the Celtic-derived fantasy mythology behind these titles sounded unfamiliar to the ears of young Italians brought up on classical Greek-Roman myths (Cyclops, Sirens, Gorgons, Hippogryphs, Chimeras, Minotaurs etc.) and adventures (such as *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*) rather than Trolls, Elves, Kobolds, Goblins, Hobgoblins and Hobbits.

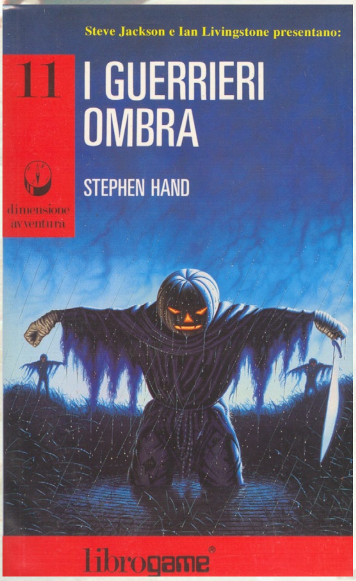
For example, *Il Signore degli Anelli* (*The*

IL TEMPIO DI FIAMMA
MORRIS - JOHNSON
5
GLI ADORATORI DEL MALE
HEADLINE MONROCQ COLLIN
misteri d'oriente
3
L'ISOLA DEI MISTERI
KIM JORDAN
realtà & fantasia
2
NEL VORTICE DEL TEMPO
IAN E CLIVE BAILEY
oltre l'incubo





Above and below, the Italian covers for *The Citadel of Chaos*, *Sky Lord*, and *Legend of the Shadow Warriors*.



Lord of the Rings) was finally published – in full – in Italian in 1970 after previous unsuccessful attempts where the first book of the trilogy was published but where sales didn't justify publishing the other titles. It was not an instant success by any means and children's literature of the time continued to be dominated by the stories of Jules Verne and Emilio Salgari.

However, some *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks were imported into Italy because Penguin Books – owners of the Puffin imprint – was a well-respected publisher and all major Italian bookshops were in contact with them. However, the cost of the gamebooks was quite high for the Italian kids of the time and as the books were not regarded as 'educational' it was all the more difficult to persuade parents to fund this new passion.

At the time, book exchanges in schools were extremely common and through these a significant number of youngsters were exposed to the earlier *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks.

In 1982, the editor Nuove Edizioni Romane published *Avventure nell'Isola* (*Sugarcane Island*) and a couple of years later Supernova published *Lo Stregone della Montagna Infuocata* (*The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*), but they were so unsuccessful that both companies decided to stop publishing gamebooks altogether.

N. 1565
WALT DISNEY
LIRE 1200
TOPOLINO
1x6
UNA STORIA
SEI FINALI!
PER LA PRIMA VOLTA
AL MONDO!

LIBROGAME IS BORN!

In 1985 Edizioni EL did a great job spearheading the gamebook genre in Italy. They even 'invented' the name for 'gamebook' in Italian: 'librogame' (they even registered it as a trademark). This word perfectly embodies the chimeric nature of this literary niche in Italy: 'libro' means 'book' in Italian, while 'game' is an English word, and in fact the vast majority of librogames published in Italy were translations.

Edizioni EL created a very recognisable cover template, one that would be preserved across different books – with different colour coding for different series – in order to encourage collectors. The books were still fairly expensive for the young readers of the eighties, but that collector-friendly feature may have been one of the triggers that led to the swift, widespread success for the librogame.

By far the most successful series was *Lupo Solitario* (*Lone Wolf*), and it still has a very wide fanbase in Italy today. A strange feature of the Italian translation is that 'Kai' Lords are translated as 'Ramas' (a word that doesn't mean anything in particular, but sounds better in Italian). However, in general the *Lupo Solitario* translations are some of the best.

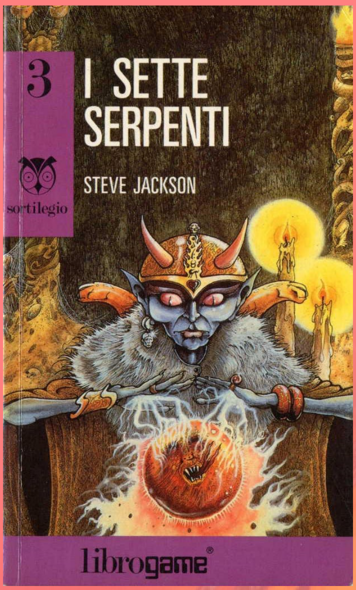
Edizioni EL published thirty-three other series (all translations from English, French and German series) and is by far the most successful librogame publisher in Italy. Other important series published by Edizioni EL were *Oberon* (*The World of Lone Wolf*), *Ninja* (*The Way of the Tiger*), *Dimensione Avventura* (a selection of *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook titles), *I Misteri d'Oriente* (*La Saga du prêtre Jean*), and, most significantly, *Grecia Antica* (*Cretan Chronicles*) which connected to a mythological background more familiar to Italian players and which had good success.

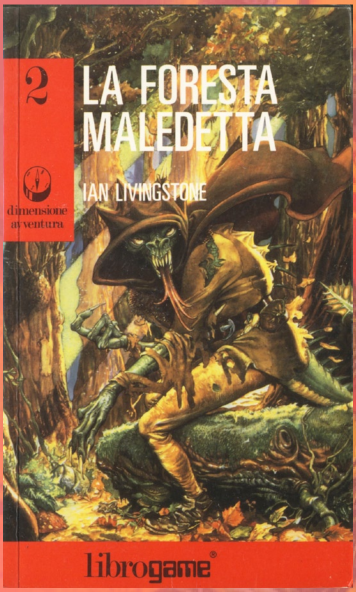
Other gamebooks that had significantly more success in Italy than in other parts of the world were the ones that required collective playing, such as *Faccia a Faccia* (*Clash of the Princes*, *Double Game – The Glade of Dreams*), where two players challenge each other, or *Partita a quattro* (taken from French *Défis et sortilèges*), where a game can be played collectively by up to four players.

MAINSTREAM BECKONS

During the late eighties librogames became almost mainstream, with many bookshops having dedicated librogames shelves, while children took their librogames to school and read them under their desks during lessons. Their wide success was the subject of sociologists' and pedagogists' analysis, linguists analysed their 'new language', and even Walt Disney's Italian versions of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck bowed to the librogame format and published a numbered comic strips that refer to other numbered comic strips on other pages, allowing younger readers to 'choose their own adventure'.

Mondadori was a mainstream publisher that embraced librogames from 1986, publishing translations of some *Choose Your Own Adventure* titles and the part of the *Find Your Fate* range dedicated to Indiana Jones as a single series (*Scegli la tua*


3
I SETTE SERPENTI
STEVE JACKSON
sortilegio
librogame


2
LA FORESTA MALEDETTA
IAN LIVINGSTONE
dimensione avventura
librogame

Dimensione Avventura

It.#	En.#	Italian title	Translator	First publication
1	2	*La rocca del male*	Stefano D'Aprile	1988
2	3	*La foresta maledetta*	Saulo Bianco	1988
3	4	*I viaggiatori dello spazio*	Angela Izzo	1989
4	17	*Appuntamento con la M.O.R.T.E.*	Angela Izzo	1990
5	16	*Il covo dei pirati*	Angela Izzo	1990
6	7	*L'isola del Re Lucertola*	Angela Izzo	1991
7	10	*La casa infernale*	Costanza Galbardi	1992
8	20	*Missione per un samurai*	Mariangela Bruna	1992
9	33	*Missione nei cieli*	Mariangela Bruna	1993
10	24	*La creatura del male*	Mariangela Bruna	1993
11	44	*I guerrieri ombra*	Mariangela Bruna	1993
12	38	*La cripta del vampiro*	Mariangela Bruna	1993

Clash of the Princes was published alongside one set of books from the *Double Game* series as part of the *Faccia a faccia* series:

Faccia a faccia

1a	*Sfida per il trono - Il libro del guerriero*	Eleonora Baron & Saulo Bianco	1988
1b	*Sfida per il trono - Il libro del mago*	Eleonora Baron & Saulo Bianco	1988

Sortilegio

1	*Le colline infernali*	Angela Izzo	1987
2	*La città dei misteri*	Angela Izzo	1987
3	*I sette serpenti*	Angela Izzo	1987
4	*La corona dei re*	Angela Izzo	1989

Steve Jackson e Ian Livingstone presentano
SFIDA PER IL TRONO
IL LIBRO DEL GUERRIERO
Simon Farrell - Jon Sutherland
2a
LA VALLE DEI SOGNI
DARIAN IL MAGO
faccia a faccia
2
ALLA CORTE DI MINOSSE
BUTTERFIELD - HONIGMANN - PARKER
grecia antica

avventura).

Mondadori also produced the most extensive, fully fledged librogame series written by an Italian author (Leonardo Felician): *Asimov Galactic Foundation Game*. This had eight titles released and probably deserved to become more famous, but by the date of release in 1992, the librogame saga was showing clear signs of decline.

Before Leonardo Felician, the first two Italian librogames were published at approximately the same time in 1987 (*In cerca di fortuna* by Andrea Angiolino and *Il Presidente del Consiglio sei tu* by G&L), but neither had any significant impact on the market and there have been no follow-up publications.

INTO THE 1990S & BEYOND

Like in the rest of the world, during the nineties the mainstream public bought less and less librogames, while hardcore fans struggled more and more to find the long-awaited new releases distributed in the bookshops. Completing collections became more and more difficult and expensive.

The *Fabled Lands* series, for example, was never translated and published in Italy. Even Edizioni EL, after 1996, reduced the output of their 34 series to a trickle – distributing just *Lupo Solitario* reprints, the only librogame series that managed to survive until 1999.

While the mainstream market appeared to flatline, there was a very significant hardcore fanbase still very much alive and kicking. Modern technologies like the internet supported the organization of a very patient but resolute fanbase. In 2007, after a fan campaign, Edizioni EL re-printed *Lupo Solitario* and revitalized the sector. Soon after, as a consequence of the niche success, the *Ninja* series was resurrected.

However, the most important, vital and creative Italian contribution to librogames, rather than coming from publishers, now came from the fanbase itself, now that it had easily accessible ways to produce and distribute librogames. A very visible example can been seen in Progetto Aon (www.projectaon.org/it/Principale/Home), i.e. the Italian section of Project Aon, a fan project, supported by Joe Dever, making all *Lupo Solitario* material freely accessible online and expanding it.

The main Italian fan-website, Librogame's Land (www.librogame.net), besides being a reference for all Italian librogame fans, also provides all the tools for professional-quality publishing of new amateur librogames with the signature cover template made famous by Edizioni EL. Librogame's Land is therefore the meeting point for all Italian would-be authors, translators, graphic artists, and editors. It finally gives them an easy and accessible toolkit for publishing new, original librogames in hard copies or for electronic media (the most impressive tool is Java Librogame Creator (lgc.altervista.org/index.html) with automatic paragraph links control, paragraph shuffling, flowchart visualizer, etc.). Some of the results (called "libriNOSTRI", i.e. "OURbooks") are brilliant and could be considered by some to be absolutely nothing less than fully professional creations.

In summary, librogames in Italy always had a chimeric nature as they were considered to be like different 'beasts' fused together like the classical monster Chimera. They were not proper English literature (only the Italian translations had real success), nor proper Italian literature (the background was often perceived as alien to the mainstream Italian culture of the time and the translations were often poor and inconsistent – sometimes plain horrible and misleading – apart from *Lupo Solitario* which was usually good), nor proper children's literature, proper niche literature or even proper mainstream literature!

Italian adventure literature for kids has always been largely based on the vast productions of Jules Verne and Emilio Salgari but, strangely, the few Italian authors that wrote librogames never considered this huge source of inspiration for their creations, and chose most of the time to use typical fantasy or sci-fi backgrounds.

Despite these setbacks, the fanbase in Italy today is much stronger, more vital and more creative than in some other parts of the world!

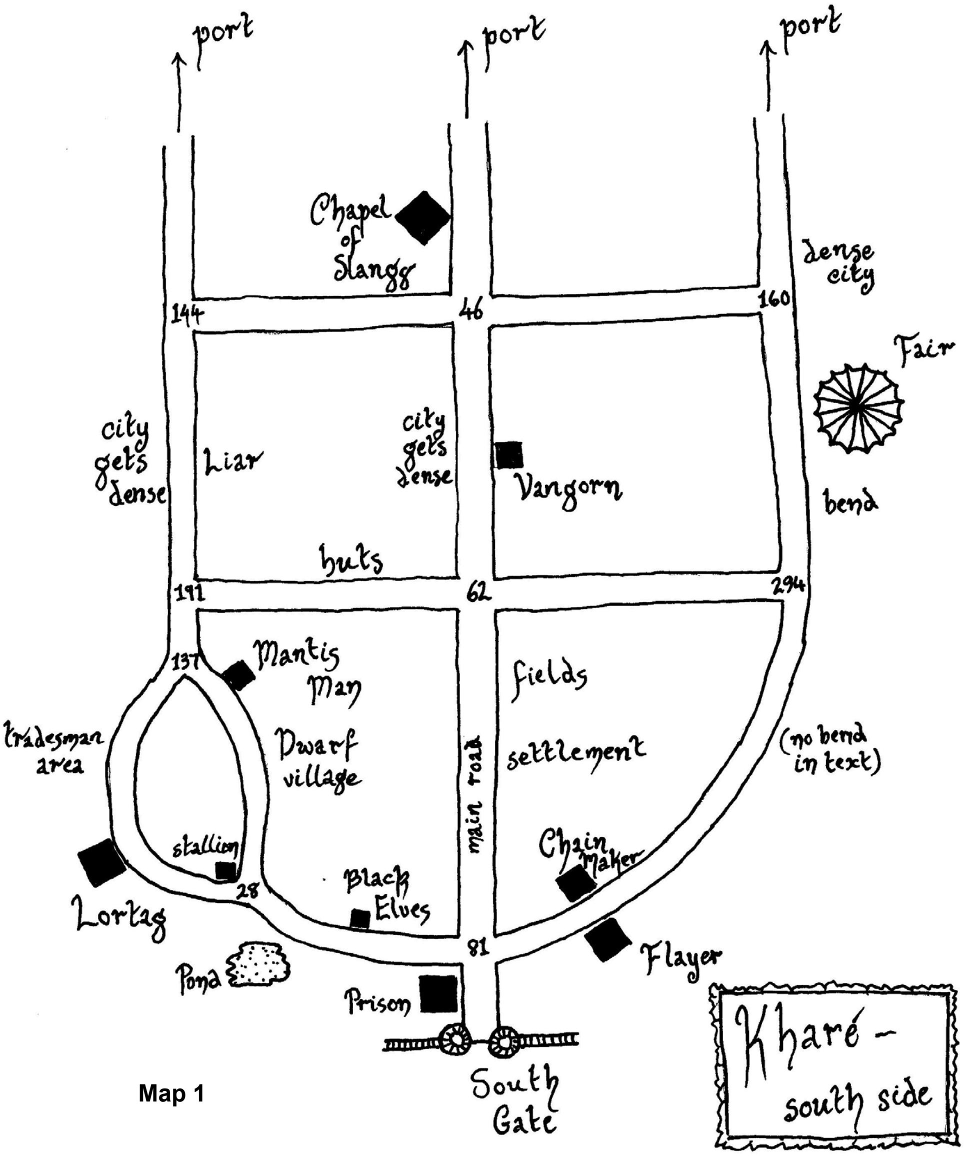
Photo by David Iliff. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

The Geography of *Kharé, Cityport of Traps*

by WARREN MCGUIRE
Art by ROBERTSON SONDOH JR. / Maps by WARREN MCGUIRE

One of the most iconic *Fighting Fantasy* locations of all, Port Blacksand in northwest Allansia, was featured in numerous *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks and novels, and was described and mapped in detail in *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World* and also in the original *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* series. This is in stark contrast to another emblematic *Fighting Fantasy* city, which was described in only one book and which was never mapped in the original Puffin publications of the franchise – Kharé, Cityport of Traps in Kakhabad in the Old World.

First visited in the second volume of the *Sorcery!* series, *Fighting Fantasy* never returned to this vermin-infested settlement (other than in new role-playing versions of the same adventure), and a map of it never appeared in any gamebook or in *Titan*. However, there is a mass of information regarding the layout of the city in the *Sorcery!* series and there are some interesting hints on one particular area in the full-colour illustration of the city in *Titan*. Furthermore, two very different maps of the city have appeared more recently, in the Myriador d20 module *Kharé – Cityport of Traps* and in the new *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* campaign *Crown of Kings* by Arion Games. What can we learn about the geography of Kharé from these sources and are there any problems with reconciling all the various pieces of evidence in trying to come up with a definitive picture of the layout of the city? That's what this article aims to find out, so join us as we return to explore *Fighting Fantasy*'s enigmatic heart of darkness –


port
port
port
Chapel of Slangg
dense city
144
46
160
Fair
city gets dense
Liar
city gets dense
Vangorn
bend
huts
191
62
294
137
Mantis Man
fields
Tradesman area
Dwarf village
main road
settlement
(no bend in text)
stallion
Chain Maker
Lortag
28
Black Elves
81
Flayer
Pond
Prison
South Gate
Kharé – south side

Map 1

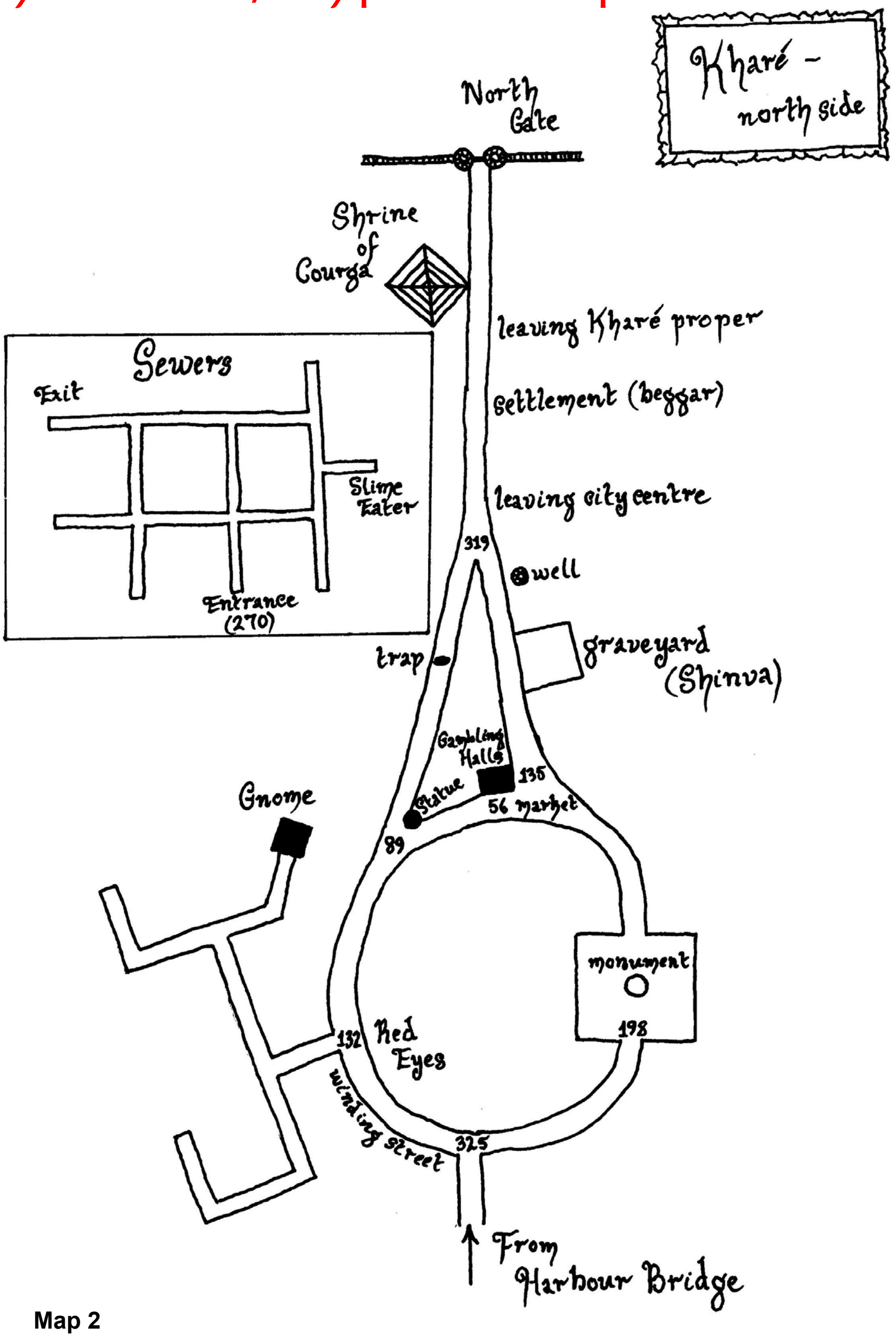
travellers beware!

THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY AS DESCRIBED IN SORCERY!

The obvious place to start is with the adventure that takes place in the city itself – the second instalment in the *Sorcery!* series, *Kharé – Cityport of Traps*. This gamebook involves you walking through the city, in a roughly south to north direction, searching for the lines of the spell that will open the North Gate and give you access to the Baklands beyond. The adventure can be divided into two halves, equating to the south side and the north side of the city, separated by the Jabaji River and by a night. Thankfully, both halves of the city are fairly easy to map from the indications given in the text, with only a couple of ambiguities complicating the picture. Maps 1 and 2 show the layout of the streets (and sewers) that you can pass along in your adventure – note that no information is given on the layout of the centre of the city just south of the Jabaji River.

Looking first at Map 1, the layout is mostly obvious from the text, although there is no bend indicated in the road between paragraphs 81 and 294, though one is required, and a bend in the road near the fair is mentioned, even though that doesn't fit with the overall layout (although maybe the fair is off the road). A striking characteristic of the city is that much of the area inside the city walls is not built up but instead appears to consist of fields, wasteland and smaller settlements and groups of huts – it is only as you approach the Jabaji River that the city gets more densely built up. It's worth noting that almost all the action takes place away from this dense city centre, which we learn almost nothing about (apart from your adventures in and around The Wayfarers' Rest inn). In order to accommodate this sketch-map into the semi-circular southern half of the city properly (see below), it should probably be stretched horizontally.

The north side of the city is a bit trickier. The most confusing area is around the market and Gambling Halls, which you can get to from both forks at the start of the north side, but the text doesn't tell you that the streets join up in this way. It's probably the case that the streets here are quite winding and that you aren't given full details of how they join up. Likewise, the join-up of the two streets after the portal trap in the middle of the road (left path) and the graveyard (right path) isn't mentioned, but must be assumed. As is the case in the southern half of the city, the northern half is densely built up near the river, but nearer the city wall are areas of wasteland, small settlements of huts and isolated buildings. No doubt like the south side, this map should be stretched horizontally to fit it to the semi-circular shape of the north side (see below). Note that Map 2 also shows the layout of (a part of) the city's sewer system, which seems very complicated as described in the text but which is actually fairly simple in design.

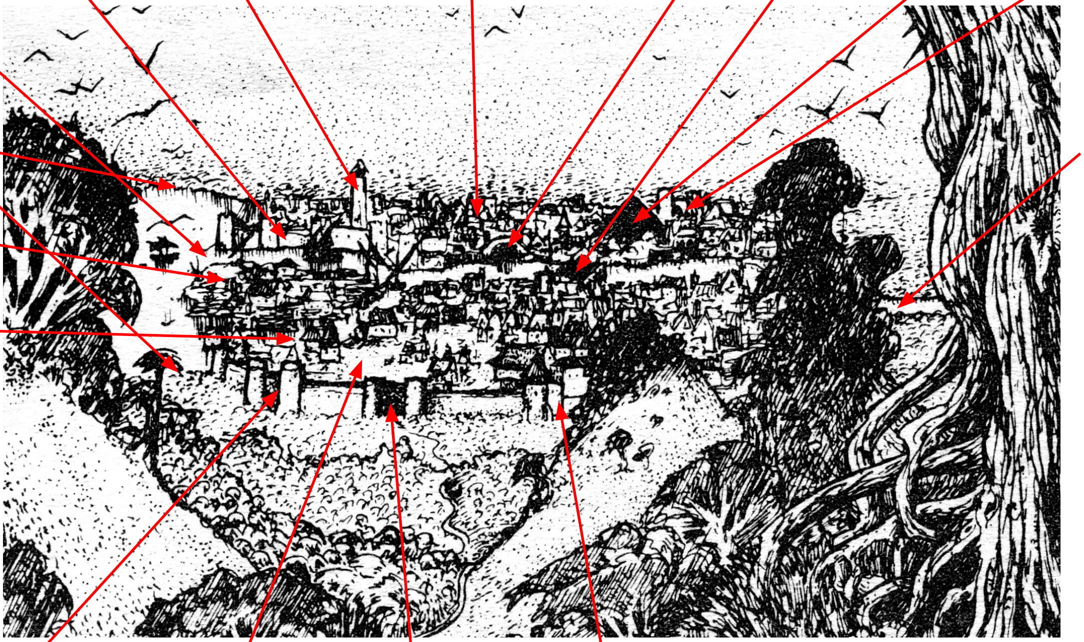


Map 2

So far so good, but these sketch maps don't give a very good impression of the wider layout of the city. Fortunately, the *Sorcery!* series contains two illustrated views (by John Blanche) of the city from above, which both contain lots of details of interest. The first of these, adjacent to paragraph 1 of the second volume, is a view of the city from the Shamutanti Hills to the south (see Illustration 1). The second is adjacent to the last paragraph in the fourth volume of the *Sorcery!* epic, and is an enlarged view of the city in a map-like panorama of Kakhabad from the east (Illustration 2).

Key aspects are highlighted on Illustrations 1 and 2. These include the following features:

- Perhaps the most striking thing is that Illustration 1 clearly shows that the Jabaji River splits into two branches at the west end of the city, forming a sizeable island. This isn't visible in Illustration 2, which is a lot less detailed.
- Just as striking, the two views show that immediately to the west of the city the river opens out considerably, suggesting that Lake Lumlé extends down to Kharé in a wide arm, which then narrows at the city to become the Jabaji. This is very clear in Illustration 1, and is fairly clear in Illustration 2, which shows two boats in the wide area of water.
- The river itself is shown as kinking southwards slightly at the eastern end of the island in Illustration 1,



north branch of river

city wall extends along north shore of river

highest tower

north side looks narrower than south side, but this could just be the perspective of the picture

culvert/arch?

Harbour Bridge

Shrone of Courga

North Gate

river widens out/lake stretches down to Kharé

island

south branch of river

river does not quite run straight through the city and kinks southward as it exits

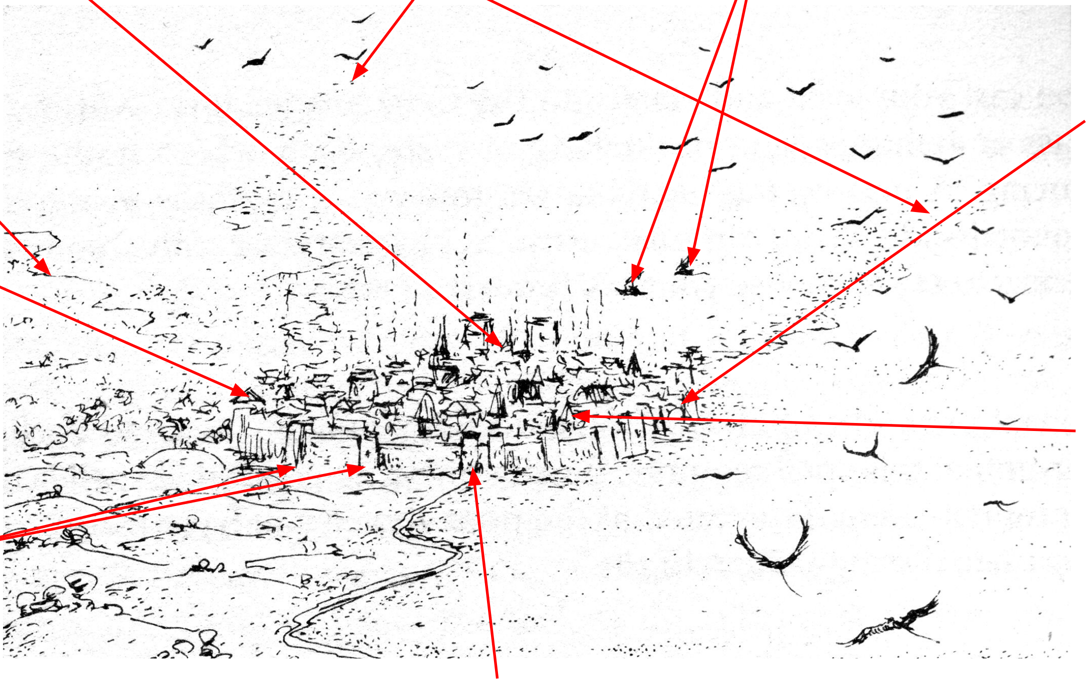
double towers in the wall

open ground/fields

South Gate

double towers in the wall; looks like there could be a kink in the wall here, but the picture is too obscure and obscured here to tell

(top) Illustration 1 – View of Kharé from the Shamutanti foothills.
(bottom) Illustration 2 – View of Kharé from the East.



two large towers at entrance of river to city?

river widens out/lake stretches down to Kharé

boats

Krooe River

North Gate?

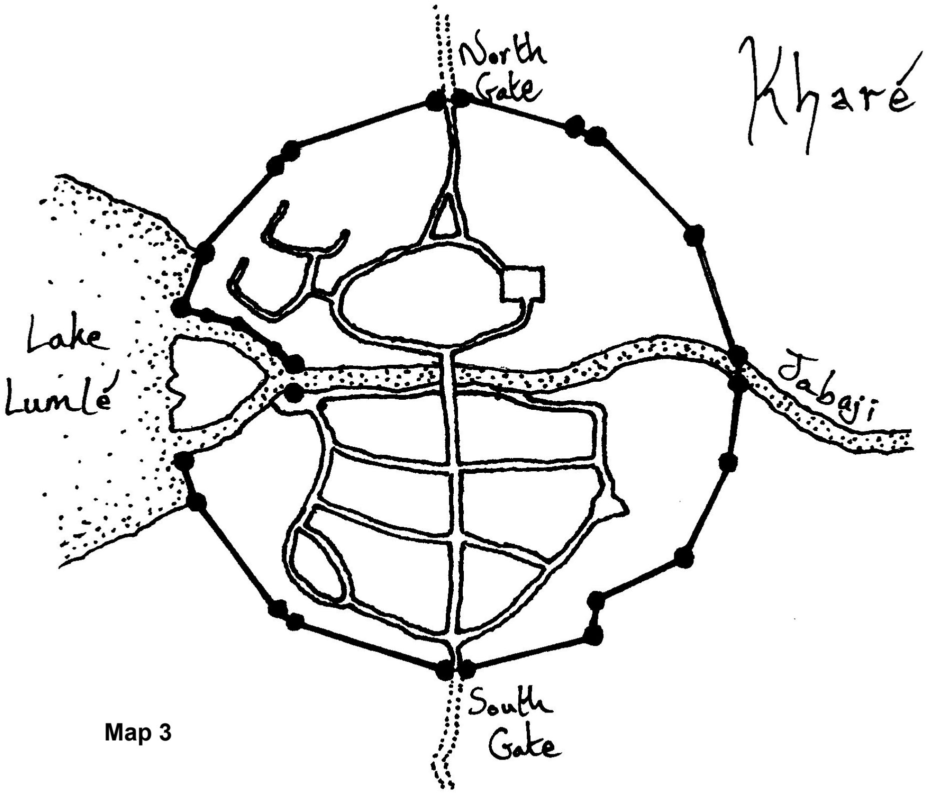
South Gate?

north side not substantially narrower than south side

single wall towers

note size of the great Jabaji River compared to the size of the city, but this may just be because of the stylised nature of the picture; exits walls through arch between double towers and again kinking southwards as it leaves the city walls at the eastern end (unfortunately obscured a bit by a tree). The course of the river through the city isn't shown in Illustration 2, although the river does sweep south as it leaves the city.

- The shape of the southern half of the city is semi-circular in Illustration 1, but the northern half looks like a squashed semi-circle. This might just be the perspective of the view, though. The city is roughly circular in Illustration 2, and the northern half doesn't appear much smaller than the southern half. Note that the image of Kharé on the *Sorcery!* map is also roughly circular with the two halves being roughly the same size.
- In both views, the city walls are punctuated by towers. In Illustration 2, these are mostly single towers, apart from where the river exits the walls between two towers (through an arch?), although only the eastern wall is shown and it's not clear that the north or south gate can be made out. In Illustration 1, there are double towers at the southwest, at the south gate, and maybe again at the southeast (where there may be a kink in the wall, although the picture is confusing here and obscured by vegetation). Might these be gates (or have they been planned as gates when the walls were built), which have been bricked up? Most interestingly, Illustration 1 shows that the city wall continues along the north shore of the north branch of the Jabaji River to the river fork, but there don't seem to be any walls on the island, nor along the south shore of the south branch of the river.
- Illustration 1 shows some of the open space (fields, etc.) in the southern half of the city (the northern half is too squashed in perspective to see what's going on). Illustration 2 shows very little detail of what is inside the city at all, other than suggestions of buildings.
- Illustration 1 clearly shows the great Harbour Bridge in the middle of the city, roughly in a straight line between the South and North Gates. For how this might fit with the colour picture of Kharé in *Titan*, see below.
- Other interesting features in Illustration 1 are the Shrine of Courga (a pyramid), which is probably rather too large, a high tower in the west end of the north side, and an arch/culvert on the north shore of the river. Interesting features in Illustration 2 are the two high towers at the west end of the city (if that's what they are), the Krooe River, which must join the Jabaji/Lake Lumlé just west of the city, and the fairly narrow width of the Jabaji compared with the size of the city, but this is probably because Illustration 2 is a strange combination of map of Kakhabad and view of its terrain at the same time.



Map 3

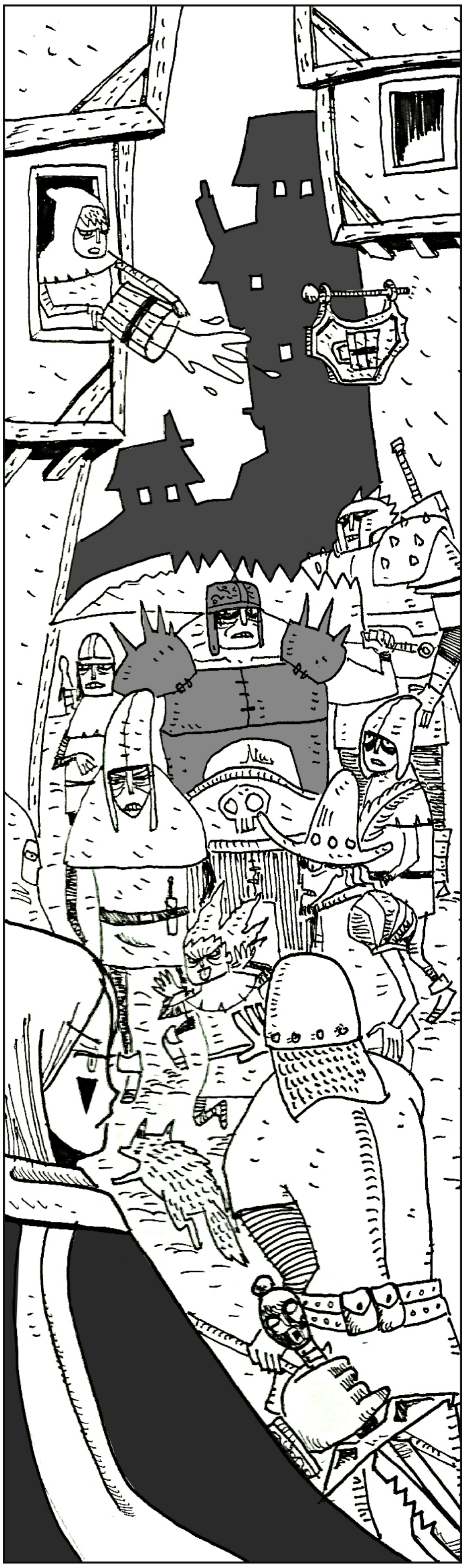
THE HARBOUR BRIDGE AREA

The two views combined with the original text aren't far off giving us a map of the city (although obviously lots of detail is missing). Another view of the city, this time in the form of a full-colour illustration (also by John Blanche) on the inside front cover of the large format edition of *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*, gives us a bit more information on the nature and layout of the dense centre of the city, although there is some difficulty in interpreting exactly what the picture shows. The picture centres on a multi-tiered bridge and The Wayfarers' Rest. This inn must be on the south side of the Jabaji River, as you stay there at the end of the first day in the city and then cross the bridge the next morning (*Sorcery!* 2, paragraph 325). That means that the picture on the inside front cover of *Titan* must be the view looking west, or, alternatively, looking south from the north shore. We might assume in that case that the bridge in the picture is the Harbour Bridge, but there are reasons to suspect that it might not be. All our information on Kharé points to the Harbour Bridge being the only bridge across the Jabaji – see for example the Illustration 1 in this article, and the text of paragraph 325 again ("the Harbour Bridge, the only crossing of the Jabaji"). If this is the Harbour Bridge, its lowest tier hardly looks high enough to let anything except the smallest rowing boats pass under it – would the only bridge across the Jabaji really be constructed to obstruct river traffic between Lake Lumlé and the Earth End coastline? Furthermore, the bridge looks rather too small to be the great Harbour Bridge, the only crossing of the Jabaji (see Illustration 1 again). Finally, the colour picture in *Titan* appears to show a boat or barge at the right-hand edge where the bridge should be joining the northern shore, if it was the Harbour Bridge. How would that work if this is the Harbour Bridge?

This is all rather confusing, but there might be a solution. Perhaps the view in the colour picture in *Titan* is from the north (or maybe the northeast), and the bridge shown isn't the Harbour Bridge, but a lesser bridge that straddles a canal leading into the heart of the city, not the Jabaji River. There is a hint of a larger structure just above the boat/barge on the right-hand edge of the picture, which may be the Harbour Bridge – it looks big enough to be, anyway. This interpretation puts The Wayfarers' Rest near the bridge, but suggests that the geography of Kharé might be more complex than we have previously imagined.

SUMMARY SO FAR

From *Sorcery!* and *Titan*, we learn that Kharé is a walled city with a roughly circular shape. It is bisected east to west by the Jabaji River, which is crossed midway between the east and west walls of the city by the Harbour Bridge. This bridge appears to lie on a north-south line between the North Gate and the South Gate of the city. The Jabaji River branches in the western part of the city, joining a



wide arm of Lake Lumlé to create an island within the city limits. Inside the walls, the city consists of a densely built-up central area of thatched, wattle-and-daub tenements and ghettos, surrounded by a scattering of smaller settlements of huts and hovels, and by fields and wasteland. Either the city walls were built on too grand a scale for the city, or the city has suffered considerable decline since they were built. A sketch map summarising the layout of the city as described so far is given in Map 3.

MAPS OF KHARÉ – d20 AND AFF

The Myriador d20 module, *Kharé – Cityport of Traps*, was the first publication to contain a map of the city (plus several smaller supplementary maps of specific areas within it). This map certainly has a number of features that are consistent with what we find in the earlier *Fighting Fantasy* books. For example, it shows the split in the Jabaji River and the island that this creates, and the road layout in the southern half of the city is vaguely consistent with the layout described in *Sorcery!* 2. Unfortunately, the map is wrong on many other counts, which means that it can hardly be considered to be a definitive map of the city. Aside from issues of nomenclature, where the module fails to capitalise on the unique flavour of the names in the original *Sorcery!* epic and instead contains uninspired names like 'Mayne Road', the following features of the d20 map of Kharé don't fit with what we know about the city from previous sources:

- The map shows the southern half of the city as a rounded broad rectangle, and the northern half as very narrow – neither of these fits with the previous descriptions and illustrations.
- The size and shape of the island in the west of the city are completely different than in Illustration 1.
- It is not clear that the dramatic widening of the river to the west of the city, possibly indicating that a long arm of Lake Lumlé stretches down to meet it, is shown – certainly not on the north shore anyway.
- The layout of the streets in the northern half of the city doesn't bear any relation to the layout described in the original book.
- Because of the extremely squashed northern half of the city, the North Gate is placed in the extreme northeast point of the wall; connected to this, the Harbour Bridge isn't between the South and North gates because of the strange positions of the gates.
- The Wayfarers' Rest is to the west of the Harbour Bridge, which doesn't fit with the illustration in *Titan*, no matter how we interpret that scene.
- Every building is detached and every spare space inside the city walls is filled with houses and huts so that none of the open areas described in the original *Sorcery!* book are indicated.
- The map doesn't really show any of the interesting city wall details (double towers, the indent, the stretch along the north shore of the river) identified in Illustrations 1 and 2 from the original *Sorcery!* books.
- The layout of the sewers in the supplementary map bears no relation to the layout in the original *Sorcery!* book.

In summary, the d20 Kharé map doesn't provide an accurate picture of the layout of the city as described in the *Sorcery!* series. What about the latest map of Kharé, contained in the new *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* campaign *Crown of Kings* by Arion Games? Whilst it avoids some of the problems found in the d20 map, it is far from perfect either. In its favour, it captures the feel of Kharé much better, with large open spaces of wasteland and clusters of huts, and a dense city centre. However, it is much too simple (the city only has a couple of hundred buildings, and the scale is all wrong for a city which it takes over a day to traverse). Further problems include the following:

- The city is a kind of oblong shape, with almost straight southern and eastern walls, which doesn't fit with Illustrations 1 and 2 from the original *Sorcery!* series. At least both halves are roughly the same size.
- The road layout and locations of interest don't match the original book very well at all.
- There are plazas at either end of the Harbour Bridge, which don't fit with the illustration in *Titan* or the crowded nature of the city centre.
- The Wayfarers' Rest is again west of the Harbour Bridge.
- The split in the river in the western part of the city and the island which this creates aren't indicated at all.
- The point where the Jabaji River meets the west wall doesn't show that the river opens out into a much wider body of water.
- The map shows the river arc smoothly in a west-southwest direction through the city and out the east wall, which again doesn't fit with the original illustrations.

So although the *Crown of Kings* map looks a little better, it's still far from perfect. Even though the original *Sorcery!* books didn't provide us with a map of the city, they did provide sufficient information for the general layout and quite a few details of the city to be determined. Unfortunately, neither the d20 nor the *AFF Crown of Kings* maps capitalised on this, and instead they provide maps which are not consistent with the original books, which have various errors and which aren't compatible with each other. So the definitive map of Kharé has yet to be drawn, but hopefully this article points towards what it might look like.

The Fighting Fantazine Survey 2013

With the anniversary behind us, we felt it was time for another survey! This time around the survey focusses mainly on the content of the magazine, allowing YOU the reader to let us know what you think of the magazine in all its aspects. We're always keen to find ways to improve the magazine, so here's your chance to let us know. Plus, you get to cast some votes on all the relatively new *Fighting Fantasy* material that has accumulated, telling us what you make of recent output from the various licence holders and selected other non-*Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks. However you get this survey form back to us (filled in scan/annotated pdf/typed text file etc.), please ensure your contact details are added so we can dish out prizes! The deadline for the return of surveys is **December 31st, 2013**.

ISSUE 7 | SEPTEMBER 2011
Fighting Fantazine
THE FIGHTING FANTASY FAN MAGAZINE
SAILING ON THE INLAND SEA! SEAS OF BLOOD IS PLUNDERED BY PIRATES IN ANOTHER FACT OF FICTION
THE DESIGNER OF GAMES! WRITER GRAEME DAVIS CHATS ABOUT FANTASY GAMING
FANTASY FLASHBACK! AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL STRUTH ABOUT HIS WINNING WARLOCK MINI ADVENTURE
PLUS A BRAND NEW BUMPER FIGHTING FANTASY ADVENTURE! CAN YOU SURVIVE THE CURSE OF THE Queen of Shades?

Favourite Front Cover

Pick your three favourite covers from issues #1 through #12.

1. 2. 3.

Favourite Mini FF Adventure

Give each title you've read a mark from 1 (awful) through to 10 (brilliant!).

Resurrection of the Dead ☐
Shrine of the Salamander ☐
Prey of the Hunter ☐
In Search of the Mungies' Gold ☐
Bones of the Banished ☐
Escape from the Sorcerer ☐
Queen of Shades ☐
Vengeance at Midnight ☐
Return to the Icefinger Mountains ☐
Hand of Fate ☐
Ascent of Darkness ☐
Starhunt: Void Slavers ☐

Favourite Interview

Pick your three favourite interviews from the following: Jonathan Green (1 & 2), Martin McKenna (3), Tony Hough (4), John Sibbick (5), Graham Bottley (5), Leo Hartas (6), Steve Luxton (6), Graeme Davis (7), Paul Struth (7), Ross Brierley (8), Jamie Fry (8), Chris Sterling (8), Ian Miller (9), Paul Mason (10 & 11), Robin Waterfield (12), Nathan Penlington (12)

1.
2.
3.

Favourite Regular Items

Pick your three favourite regular items from the following: Omens & Auguries, Out of the Pit, Fighting Fantasy Collector, Fighting Dantasy, Everything I Need to Know, Chronicles of Heroes, The Magic Quest, The Arcane Archive.

1.
2.
3.

Favourite Mini AFF Adventure

Give each title you've read a mark from 1 (awful) through to 10 (brilliant!).

The Curse of Meraki ☐
The Tower of Credos ☐
The Hunt for the Black Whale: Part 1 ☐

Favourite Features

Pick your three favourite features from the following: The Fact of Fiction (1~4,6,7,9,11 & 12), Can't Find Gundobad on a Map? Maybe We Can Help… (1), Bang! Gunpowder Technology in Titan (2), Maps in Focus (2), Out of the Frying Pan (2), Défis Fantastiques (3), Aelous Raven and the Wrath of the Sea-Witch (3,4,6~8, 10 & 11), The Book in Which You are the Hero (4,8), The Adventure Game (4,5,9), The Geography of Shadowmaster (4), Lost (and Won?) in Translation (4), You Want Thricewort with that? (4), Turn to Paragraph 400 (5 & 6), The Rise and Fall and Rise of Gamebooks in Germany (9), Ian Livingstone presents Thirty Years of Fighting Fantasy (10), 30 Reasons Why We [Heart] Fighting Fantasy (10), The History and Development of Gamebooks (10), Sometimes, Two Dice, a Pencil and an Eraser are NOT All You Need (10), Orb is Coming Full Circle (10), Rogues' Guide (11), X Marks the Spot (11), Titannica (11), The Geography of Kharé, Cityport of Traps (12), Librogame - The Chimeric Italian Passion for Gamebooks (12)

1.
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Favourite New FF Publications

Give each title you've read a mark from 1 (awful) through to 10 (brilliant!).

Blacksand (AFF) ☐
Blood of the Zombies ☐
Advanced Fighting Fantasy ☐
Crown of Kings (AFF) ☐
Heroes Companion (AFF) ☐

Favourite New FF Adaptation

Give each title you've read a mark from 1 (awful) through to 10 (brilliant!).

The Warlock of Firetop Mountain (Kindle) ☐
The Citadel of Chaos (Kindle) ☐
City of Thieves (Kindle) ☐
House of Hell (Kindle) ☐
Creature of Havoc (Kindle) ☐
Talisman of Death (PlayStation) ☐
The Warlock of Firetop Mountain (PlayStation) ☐
Blood of the Zombies (mobile) ☐
House of Hell (mobile) ☐
Forest of Doom (mobile) ☐
Sorcery! (mobile) ☐
Sorcery! 2 (mobile) ☐

Favourite Non-FF Gamebook Publications

Give each title you've read a mark from 1 (awful) through to 10 (brilliant!).

Gamebook Adventures
An Assassin in Orlandes ☐
The Seige of the Necromancer ☐
Slaves of Rema ☐
Revenant Rising ☐
Catacombs of the Undercity ☐
The Wizard from Tarnath Tor ☐
Temple of the Spider God ☐
Curse of the Assassin ☐

Judge Dredd
Countdown Sector 106 ☐

Strange Loves
Vampire Boyfriends ☐
Hex Boyfriends ☐

Destiny Quest
The Legion of Shadow ☐
The Heart of Fire ☐

Fabled Lands
The Keep of the Lich-Lord ☐

others
Infinite Universe ☐
Trial of the Clone ☐

And space to vote for some other recent new (or newly reprinted) gamebooks not listed here:

☐
☐
☐

Fighting Fantasy Collector

Fightingfantasycollector.co.uk

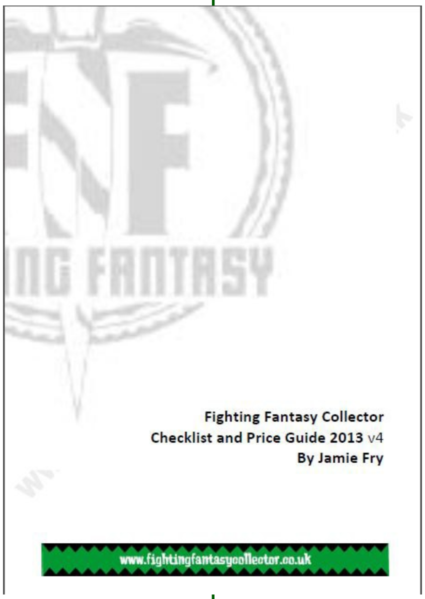
The Warlock of the official website, and well-known collector of *Fighting Fantasy* materials looks to various developments in the world of *Fighting Fantasy*...

YOU ARE THE HERO
Who S

by JAMIE FRY

This year's collector's guide has gone down a storm. I have received great feedback and am glad to hear it is being used as it was intended. When I first started issuing it in 2010 at 30 pages long I used to sell it on ebay for a few pounds, though not many of them (they don't allow you to sell eBooks anymore).

The 2013 version is longer with 52 pages due to me adding various articles into it, making it a more of an interesting read as well, albeit with fewer photos. I don't charge for it anymore and it is freely available on ISSUU (issuu.com) so that you read it on-line or download it and use it for your inventory purposes.



Fighting Fantasy Collector
Checklist and Price Guide 2013 v4
By Jamie Fry

www.fightingfantasycollector.co.uk

I have to admit, though, I have added little in the way of physical collectables as I think I have a handle on those. However what is being added are the *Fighting Fantasy* titles coming out in an electronic format – fairly minor you might think but important to record all the same. As time goes by I am monitoring prices and change those now and again to reflect the market. One day I want to fulfil my plans to actually catalogue everything with pictures, which would make for a much larger volume.

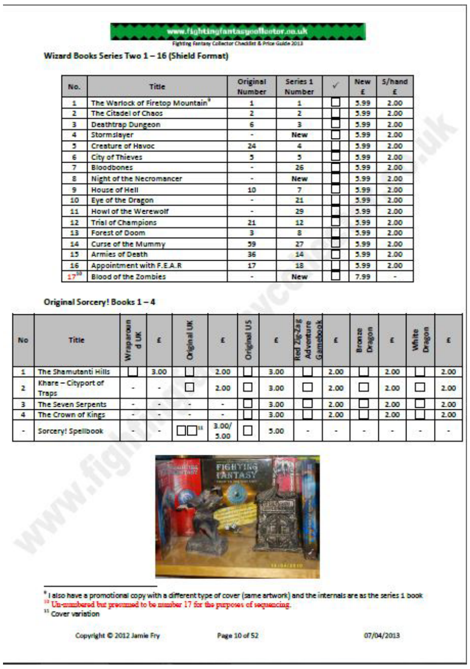
As some may have noticed, I have stopped updating my website (see link at top of the page) but will keep it up on the internet for historical purposes as it still reflects the majority of books and collectables. I am also linking more content from the official site (www.fightingfantasy.com) to this site based on the fact it should be about the original material as much as the newer releases, as I firmly believe a lot of the visitors to the site come to reminisce and come looking for those classic covers or have a renewed interest in *Fighting Fantasy* and are searching for any developments, especially where they have left home.

Invariably, as is a common thread on Twitter, mum or dad have often found a box of books in the loft and want to get rid of them, but the owner couldn't possibly let them go and starts searching the internet for a glimpse back into their childhood, read them all over again or just look to see how much they are worth.

As you can imagine, *Fighting Fantasy* is as alive in its 40-something fans as much as it is for the younger generation and that's something that Ian and Steve never forget when they reflect on the legacy they have created.

I am extremely excited in anticipation of the Kickstarter-funded book, *You are the Hero*, being released by Jonathan Green later this year, partly because it is a new book. Okay, perhaps not a new gamebook, but certainly a book steeped in history that will capture (I hope) as much of the story of *Fighting Fantasy* as it possibly can in one volume. It may not have quite made

YOU ARE THE HERO
YOU ARE THE HERO
YOU ARE THE HERO
YOU ARE THE HERO



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Fighting Fantasy Collector Checklist & Price Guide 2013

Wizard Books Series Two 1 – 16 (Shield Format)

No.	Title	Original Number	Series 1 Number	✓	New £	S/hand £
1	The Warlock of Firetop Mountain[9]	1	1	☐	5.99	2.00
2	The Citadel of Chaos	2	2	☐	5.99	2.00
3	Deathtrap Dungeon	6	3	☐	5.99	2.00
4	Stormslayer	-	New	☐	5.99	2.00
5	Creature of Havoc	24	4	☐	5.99	2.00
6	City of Thieves	5	5	☐	5.99	2.00
7	Bloodbones	-	26	☐	5.99	2.00
8	Night of the Necromancer	-	New	☐	5.99	2.00
9	House of Hell	10	7	☐	5.99	2.00
10	Eye of the Dragon	-	21	☐	5.99	2.00
11	Howl of the Werewolf	-	29	☐	5.99	2.00
12	Trial of Champions	21	12	☐	5.99	2.00
13	Forest of Doom	3	8	☐	5.99	2.00
14	Curse of the Mummy	59	27	☐	5.99	2.00
15	Armies of Death	36	14	☐	5.99	2.00
16	Appointment with F.E.A.R	17	18	☐	5.99	2.00
17[10]	Blood of the Zombies	-	New	☐	7.99	-

Original Sorcery! Books 1 – 4

No	Title	Wraparound UK	£	Original UK	£	Original US	£	Red Zig-Zag Adventure Gamebook	£	Bronze Dragon	£	White Dragon	£
1	The Shamutanti Hills	☐	3.00	☐	2.00	☐	3.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00
2	Khare – Cityport of Traps	-	-	☐	2.00	☐	3.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00
3	The Seven Serpents	-	-	-	-	☐	3.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00
4	The Crown of Kings	-	-	-	-	☐	3.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00	☐	2.00
-	Sorcery! Spellbook	-	-	☐☐[11]	3.00/ 5.00	☐	5.00	-	-	-	-	-	-

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[9] I also have a promotional copy with a different type of cover (same artwork) and the internals are as the series 1 book

[10] Un-numbered but presumed to be number 17 for the purposes of sequencing.

[11] Cover variation

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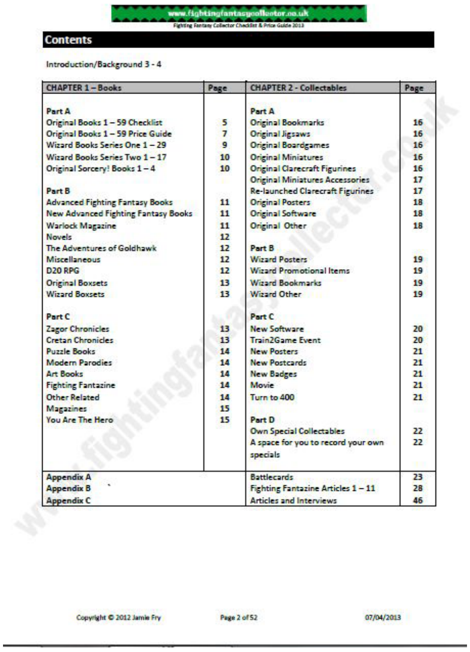

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Fighting Fantasy Collector Checklist & Price Guide 2013

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YOU ARE THE HERO

the 30th year celebrations, but it will still be significant all the same. I for one will be equally as eager as a collector to be in receipt of the goodies that will accompany the book.

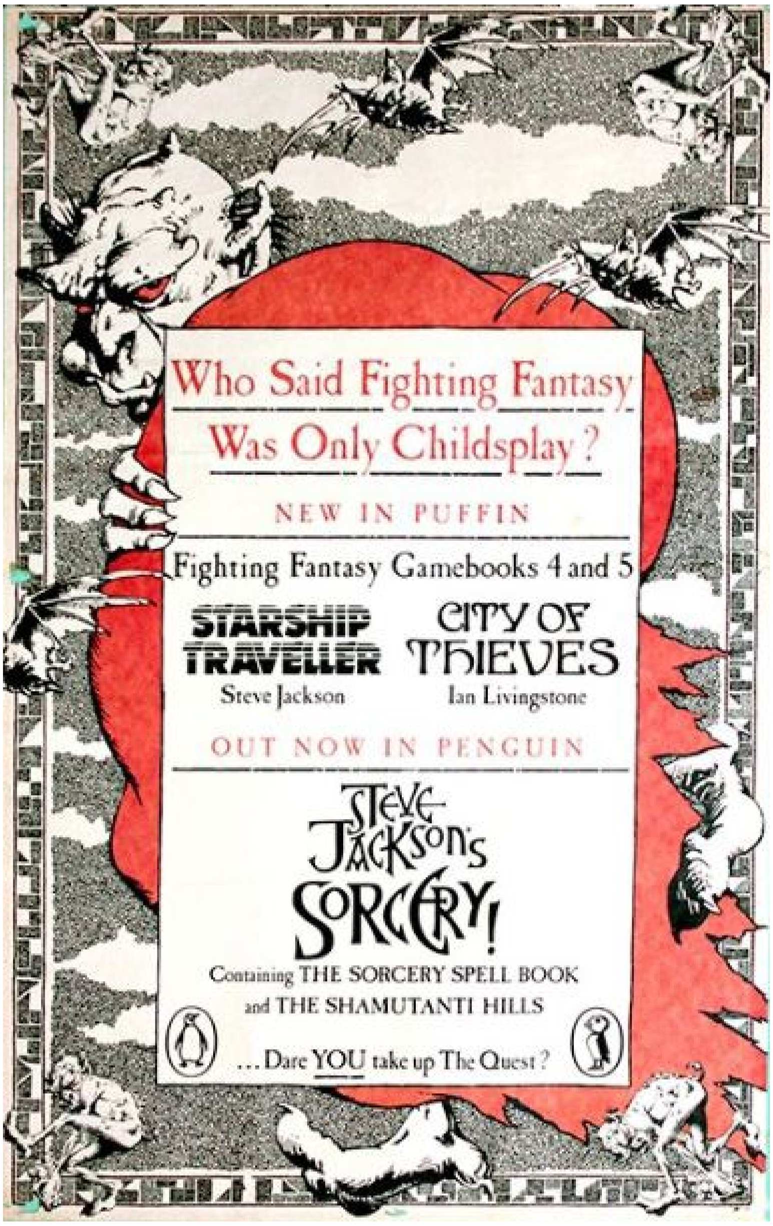
Whilst I didn't invest in some of the upgrades, like the artwork, my pledge includes the Adventure Gaming Set. This should include a pencil, dice, eraser and badge, all branded with a shield design as can be seen in the pictures – all collectables of the future (not exactly sure if the red item is the eraser or not, though).

I didn't sign up for the meet and greets as I am fortunate enough to meet Ian and Steve on a regular basis, plus funds wouldn't allow. I hope the book does get printed in hardback format and here's hoping I get a mention in some way (smiley face). I am also looking forward to seeing Derek the Troll again.

Tin Man Games have made an announcement this year regarding the order in which they will be releasing future *Fighting Fantasy* titles on the various digital platforms. It all started very quickly for them last year with *Blood of the Zombies*, followed by *House of Hell* and more recently with *The Forest of Doom*. *Appointment with F.E.A.R.* will follow soon (which, incidentally, will not use dice mechanics).

However, what follows has been influenced (in my opinion) by the release of the *Sorcery!* books, as re-imagined by inkle Studios. The innovative way in which they have brought us the *Sorcery!* books has given rise to a new challenge for Neil Rennison and his team. Whilst Tin Man have kept faithfully to the original text, they certainly did a better job than the now defunct iOS editions by Big Blue Bubble.

inkle have moved into new territory by adding new visuals and additional text to the story, thus expanding it and bringing a renewed interested to an already popular book (though some may disagree). In response, Tin Man will be releasing *Starship Traveller* and *Island of the Lizard King* in a similar format in the interim, before bringing the classics to us in whole new way next year; *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, *The Citadel of Chaos*, *Deathtrap Dungeon*, *City of Thieves* and *Creature of Havoc*.



Who Said Fighting Fantasy Was Only Childsplay?

NEW IN PUFFIN

Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks 4 and 5

STARSHIP TRAVELLER
Steve Jackson

CITY OF THIEVES
Ian Livingstone

OUT NOW IN PENGUIN

STEVE JACKSON'S SORCERY!

Containing THE SORCERY SPELL BOOK
and THE SHAMUTANTI HILLS

...Dare YOU take up The Quest?

As a collector I am getting very envious of the finds that I can attribute to others. I think this is partially due to the popularity of Twitter that has acted as a platform to share the finds across the world. I can attribute this poster find to a Twitter follower and several nice pieces of artwork have reached my shores. The poster is one not even remembered by Ian so it must be rare. The original owner found it at a market recently which just goes to show what is still out there! The new owner (via ebay) paid £52 for it, which I think this is a fair price and on reflection I will be adjusting the values of other original posters in my price guide as a result. I have been known to pay £80 for a poster in the past where I have really wanted it, but sadly this one escaped my attention.

Artwork posted on Twitter by another lucky new owner is the cover art from *Revenge of the Vampire* (Les Edwards) and *Spellbreaker* (Alan Langford). Followers on Twitter may have seen Jonathan Green getting "well jel" (look it up) at the prospect of someone else having ownership of the original cover artwork for the book he wrote.

My collecting year has been barren thus far apart from *Blacksand* finally arriving on my doorstep following the Indigogo-funded project led by Graham Bottley last year, which has reminded me to get a copy of the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* releases of *Crown of Kings* and the *Heroes Companion* editions.

Rumours of new *Fighting Fantasy*-related material (not necessarily a new book) are around, but it would be more than my life is worth to ever mention what they are. All the same, I couldn't help drop this teaser into conversation. On the other hand you can write off the idea of getting a *House of Hell* movie anytime soon due to plans for it collapsing recently. When things get less hectic in the autumn/winter I hope to do some delving to find some goodies to report on next time.

Until then you can contact me at jamie@fightingfantasy.com with anything related to the phenomenon that is *Fighting Fantasy*.

Hermoine
Shadow
Tetra
El Ravell
Sir Marcellos
Alexa
E'Lantro

chronicle of heroes

THIS ISSUE CAVERNS OF THE SNOW WITCH (Myriador d20 Module)

an account of a Fighting Fantasy RPG campaign played over 4 four-hour sessions, by ADRIAN YOUNG

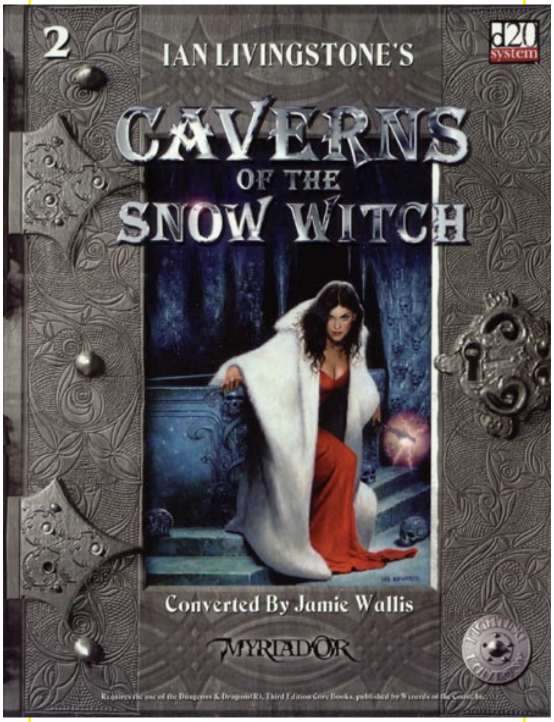
THE SPELL OF DEATH!

The Heroes of Titan: the fabled fighter Marcellos, the berserker Ravager, the female assassin 99, and the feisty silver-haired Dwarf Silverarm. Although the Heroes had vanquished the Vampire Queen Shareela and escaped the Caverns of the Snow Witch, they all still had the spectre of the dreaded Death Spell hanging over them. The female warrior Tetra had inadvertently activated the Death scroll inside the Icefinger Mountains and she and the rest of the party had begun to weaken – a state which could not be reversed by potions or other spells such as Remove Curse.

So the Heroes had but one choice. Using a map given to them by their friends Redswift the Elf and Stubb the Dwarf, they would seek out the reclusive Healer known as Pen Ty Kora – a practitioner of Southern Mask magic and the only living person known to have reversed a Death Spell. The party had heard rumours that Pen Ty lived somewhere in the Moonstone Hills. Stubb suggested they first head to Stonebridge to seek council with King Gillibran as he was confident the king knew more about the Healer's whereabouts.

And so the Heroes travelled from the Icefinger Mountains to the River Kok. They did so expediently and mostly without speaking, since the Death Spell had already started to take its toll on both their health and their outlooks. Tetra put up the gold asked for by a ferryman, and the party was taken across the great River Kok and onto the Pagan Plains, a vast windswept and barren wilderness.

It was here that the Heroes encountered five CENTAURS, whose leader Rangard took a particular interest in Tetra's white spear. Rangard claimed the spear was actually the Pagan Spear of Centaurs and belonged to his kind, having been stolen by one of the Snow Witch's Orc soldiers. The bold Rangard demanded Tetra hand over the spear in exchange for "safe passage" through their lands i.e. the Pagan Plains. Rav stepped forward and proposed a different scenario – a one-on-one duel – winner takes all. Rangard agreed, but added it would be a fight to the death. Rav couldn't believe his luck!



The battle commenced and Rangard quickly realised that he had met more than his match in the powerful Rav. As defeat loomed, Rangard ordered his fellow Centaurs to "kill them all!" The ensuing melee stained the Pagan Plains with Centaur blood. In the end, all but one of the Centaurs were killed.

The lone survivor, a bearded Centaur named Caras, agreed to help the Heroes if they spared his life, adding that he didn't know about this 'Healer' but that he would help transport them to Stonebridge. A deal was made and Caras joined the party as they made their way to Stonebridge, carrying Silverarm as she moved the slowest.

On their journey the party was attacked by BIRD MEN, but the feathered aggressors were no match for Marcellos' mesmerizing Cobra tattoo and Rav's bat sword – even in the Heroes weakened state. Stubb found the dead body of his friend Morri, who had been killed by the Dwarves' sworn enemies – the HILL TROLLS! "Curse them", he bellowed!

During one night, the party's camp was ambushed by WEREWOLVES. Redswift and Marcellos were bitten before the creatures were slain. Luckily for Marcellos, both bites clamped onto his Elven armour and Redswift was restored by a sprig of belladonna that 99 carried. As morning broke, they could see the wisps of smoke in the distance, which suggested that Stonebridge was now less than half a day's walk away.

With Stonebridge in sight, Caras was given leave and rode off into the wilderness. The Heroes advanced upon the village and happened upon a raiding party of Hill Trolls who were also heading there. Stubb and Silverarm couldn't contain their hatred of the Trolls and charged into attack, with Tetra and Rav following them into the fray. Marcellos and 99 decided to keep heading to Stonebridge, with Marcellos picking up the increasingly sickly Redswift in a fireman's carry and using his Elven Boots of Speed to shuffle them there more quickly.

The attack on the Hill Trolls proved costly, as they were part of a larger unit and the Heroes quickly found themselves outnumbered. Deciding that the situation was futile, Silverarm (badly injured in the melee) called the retreat. But Stubb was still enraged by the memories of his fallen friend Morri and tried to take on two Trolls by himself. Sadly, he was struck down by the great weapons of the war-mongering beasts. Stubb's last word was "Flee" – before a heavy spear skewered him from collarbone to hip!

Rav and Tetra were also stuck in the

thick of battle, surrounded and trapped by the mighty Hill Trolls. The Trolls pounded the unarmoured Tetra as she looked up to the heavens for a sign of help from her god, Titan. But no help came. Rav continued to fight furiously, his Manticore poison-tipped Sword of Bats combining with his legendary fighting skill to fell a few more enemies. The bloodied and battered Tetra fought gallantly using her Pagan Spear, but even with the magical shield she had cast the end was nigh.

Rav tried valiantly to fend off some of the Trolls attacking Tetra but all was in vain. With a final swipe from a Troll's great axe, the brunette Hero was gutted and her intestines spilled out as she fell to the hard rocky ground. Rav went berserk and finished off the last of the Trolls, but was it all too late? In a last desperate attempt to get Tetra some aid, Rav used a Transformation Scroll to turn into an eagle and tried to lift and carry her back to Stonebridge... but alas, her lifeless body was too heavy and he could only watch as she took her last breath of Allansian air!

When all the remaining heroes finally regrouped in Stonebridge, and after Rav angrily accused the rest of the Heroes of 'abandoning Tetra and Stubb', they met with the Dwarven King, Gillibran. The king told them that the Healer could be found on Jovik's Peak and gave them directions to its location in the Moonstone Hills.

Before departing, Ravager arranged with the king for a statue of Tetra to be built in the Salamonian courtyard worthy of her status as one of the Heroes of Allansia. Ravager committed his life savings of gold from his Coffers in Salamonis, and asked if two of Tetra's close friends in Veldik (bodyguard to the House of Brass) and Rannik (Master Thief) – both of Port Blacksand – could be contacted in case they wished to contribute to the construction of the statue. Rav's pledge was stamped with King Gillibran's royal seal and sent via the king's own GOLDEN EAGLE to King Salamon.

With Redswift on his last legs and growing weaker by the hour, the Heroes quickly tracked into the Moonstone Hills in search of Pen Ty Kora. At the foot of the mountains they met up with two other Heroes: Joe Quarterstaff (or JQ), who had recently completed a quest within Firetop Mountain, and Alexa, who had returned from her time with the Elven commune in the Silent Wood near Stonebridge. They greeted each other warmly, but there was little time to reminisce. Instead the new additions were brought up to speed on current events – namely that they would all die unless they found Pen Ty Kora.

It was not long before the Death Spell claimed its first victim – as the doomed Redswift took his final staggering steps toward the bank of the Red River. Alexa sang an Elven prayer to ensure Redswift's spirit left this world and joined Galana in the magical Forest plain in the heavens.

With Redswift's body buried and his bow marking the grave, the Heroes made the treacherous climb up and through the tortuously twisting labyrinth that was the Moonstone Hills. With the Death Spell draining their lives with every step, they eventually found a cave entrance which they hoped led to Jovik's Peak. Rav, 99, and Quarterstaff used 99's magic Rope of Climbing to ascend and then Rav used his Eyepatch of Seeing to investigate the dark cave.

When deep in the tunnel, Rav was attacked by a deadly creature known as a NIGHT STALKER. With its frightening presence, it quickly overcame Rav, who was forced to flee. He made it to the tunnel opening and then completed an enormous heroic leap across the gaping chasm onto the opposite cliff face. WOW! This left 99 and JQ (with his massive double-bladed war axe at the ready) to fight the enraged Stalker. They both withstood its fear-based spell and worked together to slay the beast, though not before receiving a few gashes from the Stalkers's giant claws.

The heroes regrouped and traversed the Hills with greater purpose as they got closer to Jovik's Peak, where the Healer lived! The party moved across a grassy plain where Rav avoided a deadly RATTLESNAKE'S bite, but he wasn't so lucky when he climbed a rope ladder into a MAN-ORC'S tree house, getting slammed by the waiting Man-Orc's axe and plummeting to the rocky landscape below. Rav wanted to burn down the tree and Marcellos liked the idea, but the elven Alexa spoke of the trees as alive and opposed the suggestion vehemently. JQ agreed and the team moved on.

Nightfall approached, but the Heroes chose not to rest as the Death Spell was accelerating and so they pressed on into the night. 99 used her stealth to sneak up to a sleeping BARBARIAN and, with sword at his throat, woke him. The Barbarian endured the wound across his neck and immediately attacked, but Marcellos dealt the savage a crippling blow and so he was incapacitated and subsequently interrogated by the Heroes. JQ gave the Barbarian some Healing cakes to gain his trust, and in return he told them how to find the Healer's cave.

Finally they had arrived! JQ and Alexa remained at the campsite, having been forewarned by the Barbarian not to enter unless they were deathly ill, so only those inflicted with the Death Spell (Rav, Marcellos, 99, and Silverarm) entered the darkness. Inside sat the horribly twisted figure that was Pen Ty Kora. The Heroes announced their presence, their origin and the reason they were here. Pen Ty committed to helping them, but warned that he had only ever cured one individual of the Death Spell, and that was after the great wizard Nicodemus had befallen it, so he was not sure if the process was infallible.

With that not-so-comforting news, the Healing Ceremony began with the adorning of the Masks of Life and the successful crossing of the thin Bridge of Hope. Then it was onto the Calming Walk. This stage involved each Hero walking alone through the howling depths of a dark tunnel. As 99 made her way, a BANSHEE'S evil cry penetrated her calm, and she was set upon. Silverarm knew it would not be a pretty sight, as no amount of armour or shielding could quell the frightening and furious attack of the undead monster. However, Pen Ty Kora warned that none were permitted to come to her aid, or the Healing Ritual be broken.

The Banshee slew 99 without mercy, wailing in delight as her three companions were forced to listen to 99's screams until there was nothing but silence. When they finally emerged from the tunnel, the full moon was out and Pen Ty Kora explained the last stage. They each needed an item of silver to summon the magical PEGASUS that would take them to Firetop Mountain for the final stage of the cure. If they could be on the mountain's summit as the sunlight to the new day broke, they would be free from the fate of the Death Spell.

Marcellos had two silver coins in his pocket, and gave one to Rav. Silverarm only had her silver cursed ring, which she was unable to freely remove. It was sickeningly clear what she needed to do, but Rav was there to help. With the grinding slice of steel through bone, Rav lopped off Silverarm's finger! Rav then kindly assisted Silverarm's bleeding with healing herbs.

A Pegasus flew down for each of the three Heroes and with mighty flaps of their huge wings lifted each up from Jovik's Peak and to Firetop Mountain. Rav decided to clear a patch of the eerie red grass (that gave Firetop Mountain its name) but in doing so released a sleeping gas which nearly knocked the Heroes out. But the book was not yet closed for these intrepid three! With the first rays of the morning sun, all were cured of the Death Spell!

After rejoicing with hugs and tears of relief, Rav, Marcellos and Silverarm flew their Pegasus back to the base of Jovik's Peak to pick up JQ and Alexa. It was only then that Silverarm realized that she could have used her Element spell to create an item of silver, instead of cutting off her finger! The Heroes laughed at the Dwarf's misfortune, but ultimately the laughs became cheers of joy, for they had succeeded in their quest, and survived the Spell of Death.

FIGHTING DANTASY

SPACE ASSASSIN

Dan works his way through the *Fighting Fantasy* series, book by book, and records his efforts as he goes. We don't fancy his chances...

adapted from Fightingdantasy.blogspot.com

by DAN SATHERLEY

S*pace Assassin* is a much-maligned entry in the *Fighting Fantasy* canon, going by the review sites linked from Wikipedia. I think it is unfair, really – I quite enjoyed the book. Probably 'cause I actually finished it! (Shock! Horror!)

You're an assassin (duh) sent on board a spaceship known to house Cyrus, an evil leader who wants to use your planet for a gruesome, genocidal experiment. Being a member of the Assassins' Guild (you can take *Fighting Fantasy* out of the middle ages, but you can't take the middle ages out of *Fighting Fantasy*) with training in 27 different kinds of martial arts (but not a single one you'd need in space), you're selected for the job.

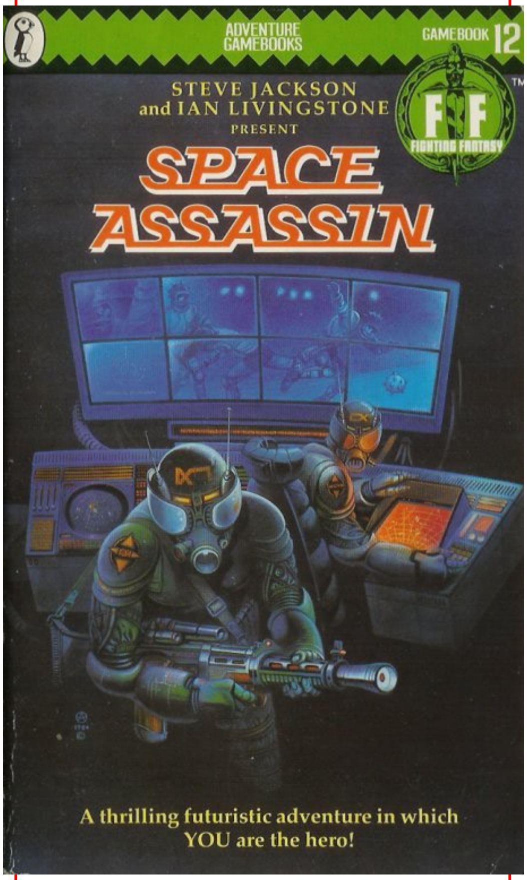
I rolled some pretty damn fine scores, so decided I'd pretty much try and fight my way through. *Space Assassin* has a pretty cool blaster-fighting system that isn't too complex and means you're not continually stopping to eat food eight times a day, as can happen in some other *Fighting Fantasy* books. It also has an inventory limit, not that I really needed to pick up anything on my journey – not a single item I retrieved came in handy at all.

Soon after arriving on board, I found a dead creature, just left by the airlock, and some dodgy wiring that almost electrocuted me. Noting I was in a dystopian future, my resolve to blast my way through hardened. I threatened scientists and got away with it, brazenly attacked guards and opened random doors for fun.

The armour concept of the book made fighting ridiculously easy. I began with an armour rating of 17, meaning I'd have to be hit six times before I even had a chance of being injured. The only time I had concern for my fighting-safety came during a hand-to-hand battle with an octopus-like thing.

So after a few rooms of things the book tells me were specifically designed to be difficult for humans to use (you'd think they'd design things specifically for themselves, but no, they're more interested in making things hard for everyone else), I came across a library with microfiche. At first I thought: 'Ha! Something designed by, and for, humans!' Then I remembered what a bitch it is to use microfiche and came to the conclusion that any society still using it in a world of spaceships and blasters is surely only doing it for the inconvenience factor!

Soon after, this the book took a rather surreal turn. I came across some buttons, pressed both, and was ejected into some kind of lush grassland – no explanation was ever really given. I went for a swim (in my spacesuit because apparently wearing it meant 'zero risk' of drowning?!), and was soon back on the ship. Must've been the future space-drugs...


ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS
GAMEBOOK 12
STEVE JACKSON and IAN LIVINGSTONE PRESENT
FF FIGHTING FANTASY
SPACE ASSASSIN
A thrilling futuristic adventure in which YOU are the hero!

The effort required was nothing compared to the next couple of encounters, though. I found myself in some kind of tank battle simulator thing that had its own rule set and adventure page sheet. I've no idea how it worked – I can only assume each 'status' position of yours was accompanied by a particular position on the gameboard by the enemy, who must've followed some kind of pattern that was too long to be recognised in the short space of time the game took. I couldn't work it out, but luck got me through – just.

Next was a *Goonies* or *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*-style 'step on the wrong tile and die' scenario, except you had to add up the numbers of the tiles you wanted to stand on, and turn to that page. If it didn't make sense, you died. If not, you got through. Now, this page pissed me off. Firstly because in the picture, the intro and outro to the room didn't make it clear if you had to stand on the middle tile or not – it seemed so, but wasn't entirely apparent. This meant there were about a billion zillion options, all based on luck. I'd been told earlier in the game by a friendly character to always take the middle, so I did, and it didn't work. Instead of condemning my character to death over what I felt was something patently unfair, I worked out what the correct path was and continued. Cheating? Technically, yeah. But only in that way where there's a bug in the game you're playing and the only way past it is to use a cheat code or something.

So I came across Cyrus, and he was a chicken. I threatened him, he begged for mercy, asked me to play cards, then ran away. I chased him, and found him wearing a giant bionic robot suit the book called a 'Waldo', for no apparent reason.

Still, he was weak as hell. I dispatched him coldly and was met with a paragraph 400 victory message of "Congratulations". Woah. Is that it? I save the world, and all I get is, "Congratulations"? Could you imagine if, after blowing up the Death Star, all Luke got was "Congratulations"? Actually, I don't think there's a single word spoken in that scene and Chewie doesn't even get a medal, so yeah.

Anyway, I enjoyed *Space Assassin*, it was quite different and, dare I say it, more enjoyable than the better-known *Starship Traveller*. Is it a little easy? Only if you ignore the random, bizarre asides, which I suppose give the book, at least this early in the series, a certain distinctiveness. I'd no idea what to expect going in, as I don't think I had this one as a kid, but it was worth it.

STATS COUNTER

GAMEBOOKS ATTEMPTED	12
GAMEBOOKS WON	2
DEATHS BY GAME BUG	1

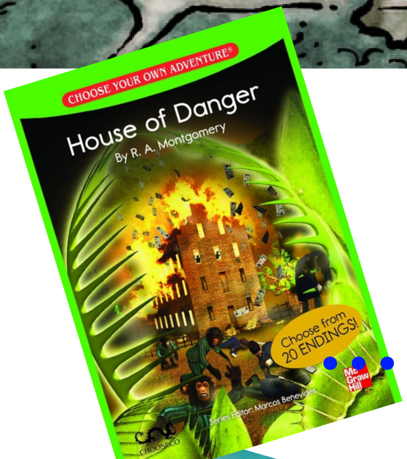
Fighting Fantazine

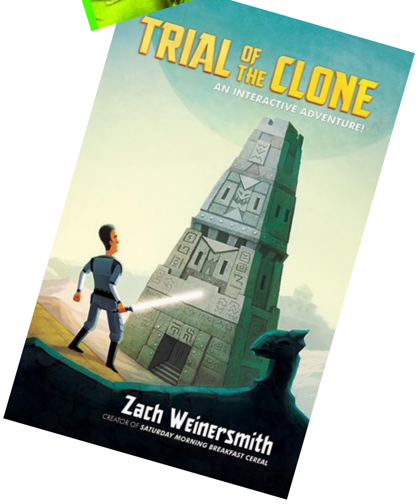
THE FIGHTING FANTASY & GAMEBOOK FAN MAGAZINE

The Arcane Archive

The latest gamebooks and gamebook-related materials are reviewed by the Fighting Fantazine team...

SORCERY!
SEA
KRISTATANTI


CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE®
House of Danger
By R. A. Montgomery
Choose from 20 ENDINGS!


TRIAL OF THE CLONE
AN INTERACTIVE ADVENTURE!
Zach Weinersmith
CREATOR OF SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CEREAL

94 APPS
The classic *Fighting Fantasy* titles *Sorcery!* and *Forest of Doom* are adapted for electronic devices by inkle Studios and Tin Man Games respectively.

96 BOOKS
House of Danger, *Trial of the Clone*, *The Heart of Fire*, *Future Robot*, *The Thief of Memories*, and *Who Killed John F. Kennedy?* are reviewed.

99 RPGS
The new *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* manual, *Blacksand*, gets a look in, as does *The Sorcery Spell Books*, the French edition of the main *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* rule book, and a map of Allansia for the French edition.

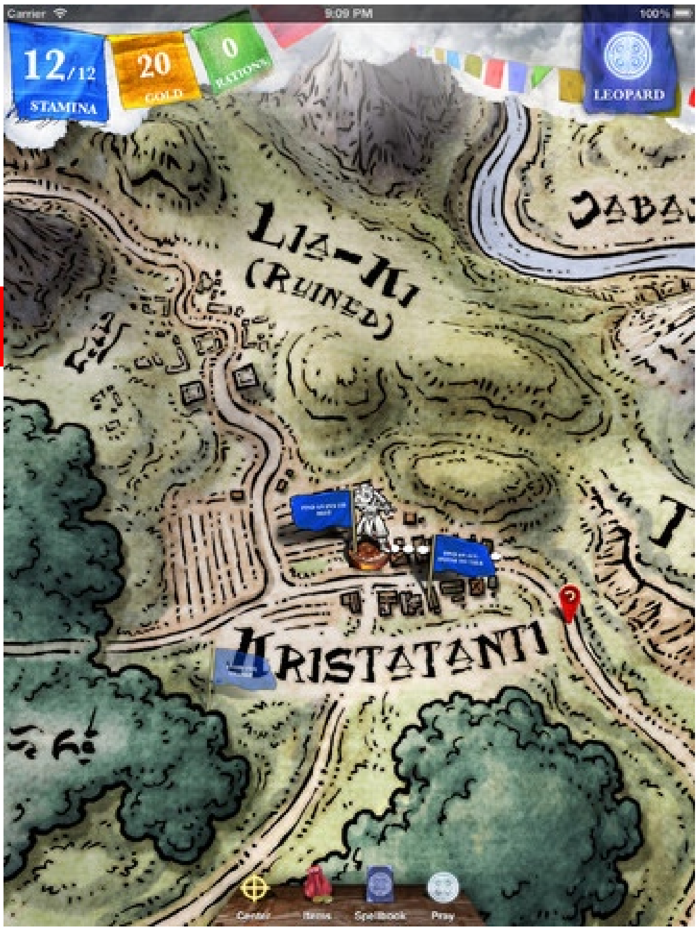
STEVE JACKSON AND IAN LIVINGSTONE
BLACKSAND
ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY
ARION GAMES
GRAHAM BOTTLEY

SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS!

Sorcery!

THE CROWN OF KINGS HAS BEEN STOLEN! We venture into the hills of Shamutanti to find out what has changed...

Author Steve Jackson **Publisher** inkle Studios **Price** US$4.99
Web inklestudios.com/sorcery **Published** May 2nd, 2013



Steve Jackson's *Sorcery!* series has seen a lot of love in this past year. Arion Games has released it as a scenario for *Advenced Fighting Fantasy* 2nd edition, as well as reprinting *The Sorcery Spell Book* with updated descriptions and now inkle has adapted *The Shamutanti Hills* as an app, making the bold decision to make some changes to both the text and the game system. The decision has paid off with huge success, giving us an enhanced version of the gamebook whilst still remaining true to the spirit of the original.

How has the *Sorcery!* app remained true to the original? It still retains all of the characters, locations, puzzles and fights of the original. You can still chat with the Sightmaster, explore a Goblin mine, or duel with Flanker. Anyone who has read the original gamebook can still enjoy the scenarios that they enjoyed many years ago.

The app also retains one of the most innovative parts of the *Sorcery!* epic – the spellbook. You are still able to cast all of the spells from the original gamebook.

You still have STAMINA, although you start out with 20 STAMINA points rather than have a randomly determined amount. You still need to collect components and eat provisions in order to survive and you still need to make sure that your STAMINA does not go down to 0.

However, inkle have taken advantage of the increased interactivity of the app. You no longer read a long piece of prose about what a character says before deciding your options. Instead, you are given many options when approaching an NPC about what you can do or say. You can have some very in-depth conversations from all kinds of NPCs about their background, their lives or the hills and this adds immense depth to the app.

For example, in Cantopani, the first village you come across, you can ask a villager about inns, equipment or food, ignore them, push them out of the way or even reduce them to dust by casting the ZAP spell upon them. Most of the NPCs will now stop to answer questions about what they are doing in the hills and how they came to be there. This has really turned *The Shamutanti Hills* from a set of encounters into a place where all the characters have shared lives and a shared story.

New plot threads are weaved into the game. There was a previous champion that left Analand in search of the crown, but contact with him has been lost. The goblins in the mine may be looking for more of the metal that the crown was made from. One village celebrates the festival of the young, where children can run wild and do as they wish. There is a new dark, dangerous mine in the hills to explore. Will any of these plot points have a bigger impact in future books? I certainly hope so.

SORCERY!
BAD SEA

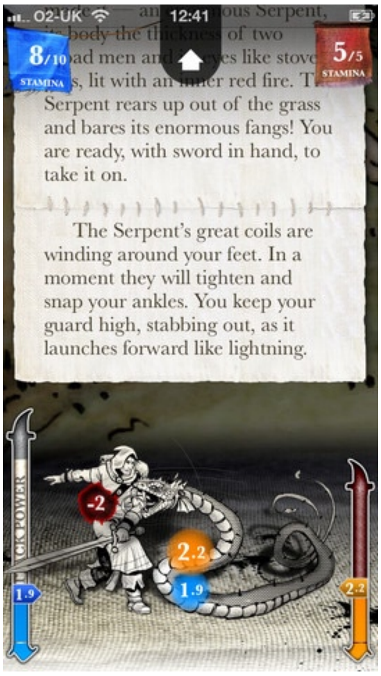
However, inkle have not stopped at adding extra dialogue to the game, as they have also incorporated the use of interactive graphics to create a beautiful map of the Shamutanti Hills, which you can send your character across in order to go to certain places or do certain things. Now, you can see exactly where your character is travelling and it certainly adds more meaning to choosing directions than using pure text.

The map also has the excellent features of placing markers at all of the locations you have passed by in case you would like to 'rewind' the game back to them, allowing you a second chance if you think you have missed a special item or if you think you are not prepared enough to survive. inkle certainly have allowed gamebook players to follow their desires and allow them to cheat once in a while.

Combat also uses graphics rather than dice and words now, which allows the player to take part in a mini strategy game rather than rely on luck. Instead of SKILL, you and your opponent have an attack power value. Every round, you choose what your attack power value is, up to a certain maximum, whilst your opponent does the same. Once you have both picked, the numbers are revealed. Whoever has the highest number wins and inflicts damage upon their opponent. The amount of damage depends on how high your attack powers are.

Usually, if both combatants used a high attack power, more damage is inflicted by the winner. However, if the loser chose an attack power of 0, they chose to defend and only take 1 damage, no matter how much higher the winner's power was. After the round, the maximum attack power you can use in the next round changes. If you used a lot in one round, you can't use as much in the next round. If you defended in one round, your maximum increases. You never know how much attack power your opponent can use each round or what they are planning to do, but there are clues.

As well as estimating how much they have left based on what they did in the previous round, there are also verbal clues, unique to each opponent, about whether they look like they are going to ready themselves for a big attack or hang back to defend. In order to win in combat, you need to use all of these clues and find a strategy of beating your opponent's strategy.



its body the thickness of two ad men and eyes like stove s, lit with an inner red fire. The Serpent rears up out of the grass and bares its enormous fangs! You are ready, with sword in hand, to take it on.

The Serpent's great coils are winding around your feet. In a moment they will tighten and snap your ankles. You keep your guard high, stabbing out, as it launches forward like lightning.

Some opponents are pretty simple, using big attacks until they are too tired and then defending. Other opponents are more sophisticated, such as Flanker the Assassin, who tries to conserve his attack power by using only slightly more than what he thinks you will.

If you lose a fight, however, you do not have to go back all the way to the start. You are allowed to have another go at it in classic gamebook cheater's fashion and don't worry if it all sounds too complex, as the Sightmaster sergeant will take you through a training session before you start where he tells you exactly what to do, and then you can fight him where he goes less easy on you so that you can see what real combat is like before you head out into the hills.

The LUCK score has also gone from the game, which now has no random elements whatsoever. Instead of random rolls, the consequences have already been picked out and it's up to you to work out what they are. However, you are not going to miss the absence of randomness as you will be too busy trying to estimate your opponent's next attack power, having a conversation with an NPC or enjoying the lovely map.

Libra has also been removed. Instead of calling upon the goddess of justice, you call upon animal spirits who are able to heal you and also help you in other situations. You are able to call upon them more than once in the game. However, after you have called upon them, you have to wait a while before you may do so again.

Spellcasting remains very similar to the original. You still have to use three-letter codes, with the explanation that you are drawing upon the power of different combinations of constellations, but you will never choose the wrong code as the app stops you from doing that. Instead, you are given a selection of letters that you can choose from. It is still good practice to memorise the spells from your spellbook so you know their effects and also because some letters have been replaced by Greek letters. It also takes time to angle the letters correctly in the correct positions but this is a minor niggle.

The app makes full use of the internet. Whenever you win a battle or do something interesting, such as vaporising a villager or digging a cesspit, you have the option of tweeting the world about it via Twitter. Most gamebooks were a solo pastime. However, new technology is ensuring that they are becoming more social activities as it is now easier to tell everyone about your digital shenanigans. You are also able to save you character to the cloud to be uploaded again for when they are needed in Kharé.

The Shamutanti Hills is a must-have for any dedicated gamebook fan. inkle have taken a popular gamebook and enhanced it with good use of digital media. If you haven't already played it, you should do so now so that you have a character to use for when *Kharé* comes out in the autumn.

STUART LLOYD

Forest of Doom

Author Ian Livingstone **Publisher** Tin Man Games **Price** US$5.99
Web tinmangames.com.au **Published** May 29th, 2013

Back with their third adaptation of a *Fighting Fantasy* book is Tin Man Games. After two modern, Earth-bound adventures (something atypical of the series!), we finally have a Titan-based fantasy adventure which gives us the opportunity to see how Tin Man Games tackle the genre. They have plenty of experience with it, having released seven fantasy gamebooks already as a part of their *Gamebook Adventures* range. So this app should immediately feel somewhat familiar to those who have played those titles.

All the features of the two previous *Fighting Fantasy* titles are in place, from the alternate cover art by Dan Maxwell to the coloured line art and the amusing list of achievements. The last is always a welcome feature to encourage long-term and new fans alike to explore beyond the 'one true path' of the adventure. Luckily *The Forest of Doom* does have some interesting set pieces off the beaten path (see what I did there?), which makes hunting down these achievements less of a chore than it might have been.

The Forest of Doom is a very early adventure in the *Fighting Fantasy* series and as such doesn't spend any time breaking new ground. At this point, just being a gamebook was enough. Readers with long memories can look back to my review of the last reissue of the book in issue #6 for my feelings on this, but perhaps it is best if I sum up some of those thoughts.

This is a fairly undemanding adventure that on the whole works on the basis on instant gratification. By this I mean that you make a choice and immediately discover the consequences, unlike later titles that spin things out for longer in order to lure you off the correct path.

The correct path in this case isn't so much a path, but a highway. While without the ability to backtrack as with the later *Scorpion Swamp*, the reader can cover a reasonable amount of the forest in one sweep and the adventure has the added feature of allowing (once a dice roll is passed) the reader to return to the start and re-enter the forest for another go.

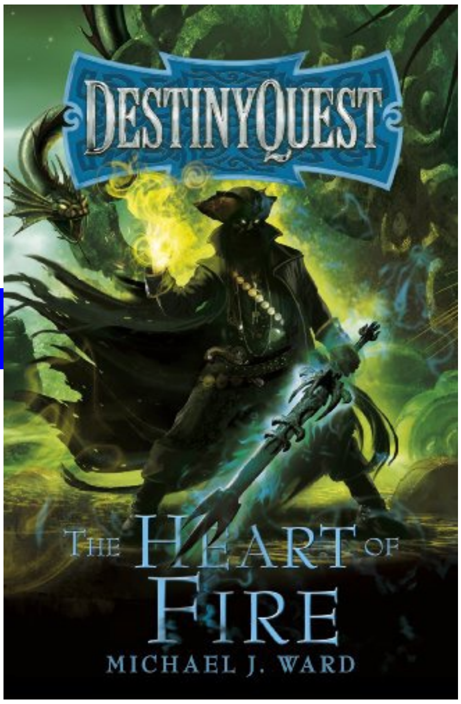
So what do we make of this newly scrubbed-up version of an old classic? While I was never a fan of Malcolm Barter's original line artwork for the book, the colouring work of John-Paul Bove does bring them to life and make them visually more interesting than they originally were. Meanwhile, the music of Adrian Watkins adds an interesting edge to the gameplay environment, but one can't help wishing some of the music was more event-specific. I'm probably asking for too much here, but something akin to a short movie score would be nice. Otherwise the music generally tends to float from 'adventuring' to 'fighting' and back again.

In the end the app is a crisp, faithful rendering of a somewhat old and creaky gamebook, making the adventure appear more modern and exciting than perhaps it deserves to look. But if that is the main complaint that can be levelled at the adventure, then the bar is pretty high. However, with news of plans for *Appointment with F.E.A.R.*, we are assured that Tin Man Games are willing to do more than give the adventures a simple facelift as here. Roll on the return of the Silver Crusader!

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Destiny Quest: The Heart of Fire

Author Michael J. Ward **Publisher** Gollancz **Price** £8.96
Web destiny-quest.com **Published** November 5th, 2012



All the way back in early 2011, *Destiny Quest: The Legion of Shadow* exploded onto a world that had been pretty devoid of paper gamebooks for some time. It was a behemoth of a book, combining excellent writing with game mechanics reminiscent of a MMORPG. *The Legion of Shadow* proved to be a hit with all of its innovations such as a huge list of options with which to customise your character, an imaginative list of opponents and the controversial rule that your character could not die.

In 2012, Michael J. Ward released the second gamebook in the series. *The Heart of Fire* proves to be an improved version of the original. The game mechanics in *Destiny Quest* are big on number-crunching and so there were always improvements to be made to the original. However, it seems that Michael has been meticulous in his playtesting and ruthless in his changes to make sure that *The Legion of Shadow* has been updated to be more balanced and that *The Heart of Fire*'s heroes have a fighting chance against the various monsters in the book.

In many ways, *The Heart of Fire* is very similar to the *Legion of Shadow* – your character has been blessed with immortality and has to fight their way through three acts to a climax in the third act, all the time collecting better equipment, choosing the path of a warrior, mage or rogue and then maybe learning a new career based on that choice. You then get a ton of abilities, either because they are intrinsic to your character, because you learnt them as part of a career or because they are on an item you are using. This gives you many options in each round of combat – do I use my charm ability to reroll that die? Do I pick the gun that kills an opponent when at 5 health or something else?

Your opponents will also have abilities to use against you, and sometimes you will be fighting opponents who have creatures to support them. Do you attack the main opponent or their supporter first? The decision is made even more complex when some battles give you more powerful items if you leave the support creature alive for the fight.

However, Michael has updated his game system. First of all, he has ensured that lots of items give speed bonuses to characters of all classes. You hit your opponent in combat if your speed score + the roll on 2 dice is greater than your opponent's speed score + the roll on 2 dice. This method means that having a speed score 3 lower than an opponent effectively dooms you to losing and Michael knows this. Knowing this, with a careful selection of equipment, the worst opponents I came across had a speed 1 higher than mine, which makes them beatable.

In *The Legion of Shadow*, if you wanted a new ability, you had to replace an old piece of equipment with a new one. Now, Michael has come up with runes that allow you to add abilities to pieces of equipment, meaning that you can keep that much-loved sword from act 2 and then upgrade its power so that it can still hold its own in act 3.

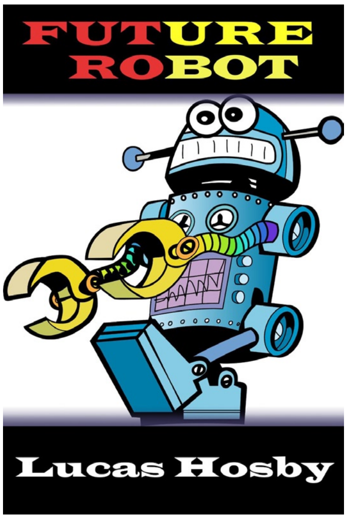
Michael has also made some additions to the system itself. Each act now has a team battle which requires two heroes to fight the monster. If you don't have two heroes, it's okay – Michael has provided us with a powerful rogue to act as your companion in the fight who can either be the main combatant or support you in the combat using his abilities.

There are also more options in the book that have consequences later on. In the first act, your choices will determine whether you side with the nature-loving Wiccans or the religious Inquisition. Michael has made sure that both sides have a case both for and against them, so it is up to you to decide. In act 2, you also have to decide whether to side with a group of hunters or stop them from hunting the wildlife.

As with *The Legion of Shadow*, the book is full of references ranging from King Arthur (fighting the Fisher King) to Dante (your companion through Hell is called Virgil) to real life (a weapon called Nelson's Column) to *Destiny Quest* itself (you can make a magic book called the self-published book, which is what *The Legion of Shadow* originally was). There are also many characters from the previous book, including Avian Dale and Elidas Falks, everyone's favourite vampire hunter, who appears in a new twist.

The story is more connected than the first book as you pursue a demon whilst learning about the future and your own demonic nature. The ending is not necessarily a happy one but it is an interesting one and I look forward to see how *The Eye of Winter's Fury* connects with it.

STUART LLOYD



Future Robot

Author Lucas Hosby **Publisher** Amazon Digital Services, Inc.
Price US$3.99
Web lucashosby.wordpress.com
Published February 28th, 2013

Here we have a light-hearted foray across time and space. This is a humorous gamebook that does not require any extra rules, simply choices. The basic plot involves a robot appearing before you and claiming to be you from the future. This leads on to all kinds of shenanigans, with the story being similar to a *Choose Your Own Adventure* where the paths are extremely branching and each playthrough will bring a radically different story. You could end as anything, from being a millionaire computer-game designer to being the reason for the universe forming to getting a severe case of food poisoning. There is a lot of humour and you just have to take whichever option sounds great and see what crazy journey it takes you on. After all, if you don't like an ending, Lucas has put a link back to the previous paragraph if you regret your decision and a link back to the beginning if you really regret your decision (even the ending where you end up as a 20-year-old millionaire in charge of a computer-games company). Literally anything can happen and although, on the face of it, this is sci-fi book, some of the planets you visit have fairies, giants and all kinds of fantasy elements making this an excellent book for those who want to explore a bizarre universe.

STUART LLOYD

Arcana Agency: The Thief of Memories

Author Paul Gresty **Publisher** Megara Entertainment **Price** US$40.00
Web megara-entertainment.com **Published** January 10th, 2013

Arcana Agency is a gamebook like no other and I certainly hope that it will pave the way for many more gamebooks like it in the future in all ways – style, illustration, writing, plot design and game design. It's a big statement to make, but I'm going to try to prove it to you here.

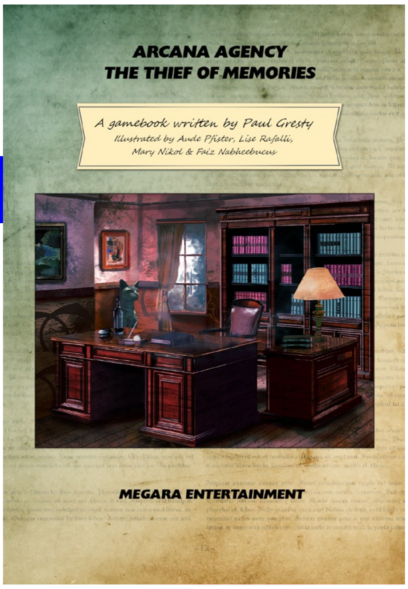
What is the gamebook about? We're in 1930s New York and people are reporting strange goings on. Who are they gonna call when the Ghostbusters won't be around for another half a century or so? They call the Arcana Agency, a paranormal private investigator agency set up by William Heart, philanthropist.

However, you do not play an investigator from the agency. Instead, you read the story of three investigators – Humphry Brown, professor of anthropology; Joe Strelli the hot-headed investigator who wants to fund his law degree and Tom Shanigan, former boxer, wannabe actor and social climber. Each of these characters has a set of stats and a background that you can read about at the beginning. Instead of looking through these characters' eyes, the book speaks of them in the third person as you shift your focus from different characters in some parts of the book. Sometimes, you are with all of them. Sometimes, you are with just one of them.

The book does not, however, stop with our protagonists, but instead puts a lot of detail into the backgrounds of all its characters and their interlinking relationships. Every character has their own portrait, which is usually on the page where you first meet them, and other important characters have their own bios which you can read about. I found this a nice touch and also very important for winning the game as this is a whodunit by nature and since there are plenty of suspects, I needed to be sure about who I was accusing.

You will most likely come across a clue which states: 'If you find yourself doing x, add a number to the paragraph you are on' which means that, just like real detectives, you will be rewarded for your attention to detail as these secret clues come up in the most unlikely of places.

Winning Arcana Agency depends very little on luck and more on your ability to interact well with the characters, reading the text carefully so that you don't miss any clues and being able to piece together the information you have been given across all four parts of the book in order to get the big picture of the story that led to all of these crimes. There is luck involved, such as with skill checks, but these checks are normally there to give you a 'second chance' if you do not have the correct item or codeword for a situation and the difficulty of the skill checks is low enough so that you have at least a fighting chance of succeeding at them. It seems that Paul has made sure that victory should be obtained through skill rather than luck.


ARCANA AGENCY
THE THIEF OF MEMORIES
A gamebook written by Paul Gresty
Illustrated by Aude Pfister, Lise Rafalli,
Mary Nikol & Faiz Nabheebucus
MEGARA ENTERTAINMENT

The book is split into four parts, each one dealing with a particular investigation or event and with each investigation you are given plenty of options to explore, but also plenty of ways of achieving victory. There is no narrow path through the book and no one item is essential. You can solve most problems with two or three approaches. Each investigation brings with it a whole slew of surprises and twists as the seemingly impossible happens, secrets are unearthed, tricks are revealed and eventually, the case will be (hopefully) solved. Thanks to some excellent storytelling, you will be guessing whether the paranormal actually exists in the book for most of it.

The construction of the story and the writing in all cases is superb. The strength of the book lies in the dialogue between the characters, which reveals their hopes, dreams and relationships with each other. None of the characters feels two-dimensional and all kinds of mundane everyday things creep in, such as Humphry having a cold in the prologue and Strelli being on a date in part 2. These little things could eventually become plot points, but they also make you feel like you are in a living, breathing world rather than a place where events happen to the protagonists because that's the only way to move the plot along.

The finale leads you to a tense situation where you have to reveal the perpetrator of a crime leading back several years. Your mind may change several times over who did it and you will need to have some good skills of deduction and observation to work out who it was and how they did it.

The artwork is atmospheric and clear and the layout of the book is absolutely gorgeous. The hardback copy is of high quality and would look great on any bookshelf.

If you do reach the victorious end of this book, there is one final, stunning twist, which sets the plot up for the sequel which I hope will be out soon as I can't wait to get back to the 1930s and investigate the paranormal again.

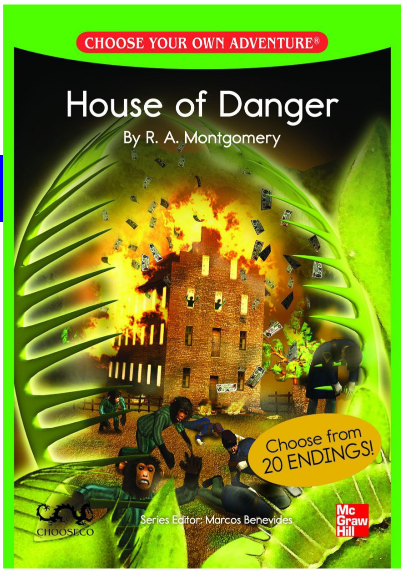
Arcana Agency is an excellent gamebook that proves that gamebooks have come a long way since the dungeon crawls and arbitrary consequences of the 80s. We now have a gamebook with great characters, intricate storyline and a situation where victory is based on thinking rather than dice rolls. Keep it up, team!

You can buy the prologue of *Arcana Agency* as an app for $4.99. You can buy a pdf of *Arcana Agency* for $13.24 and a full-colour deluxe hardback copy for $46.33 including worldwide shipping. If you would like to get a free pdf of *Arcana Agency*, Paul Gresty has generously agreed to give a limited number away for free on a 'first come first served' basis. If you would like to obtain a free pdf of *Arcana Agency*, email sl1605@gmail.com by October 23rd in order to receive a copy.

STUART LLOYD

Choose Your Own Adventure: House of Danger (Graded Reader Edition)

Author R.A Montgomery **Publisher** McGraw-Hill ELT **Price** unknown
Web www.mhe-cyoa.com/ **Published** 2013



House of Danger is not one of R. A. Montgomery's more popular *Choose Your Own Adventure* books. Reviews on gamebooks.org describe it variously as "a *Give Yourself Goosebumps* book gone terribly wrong," "a disappointment" and "one of [Montgomery's] worst." In spite of this, I have some fondness for the book. Aside from the basic nostalgia of remembering my first encounter with it in my elementary school library, I also like the basic "mysterious, scary house" setup, and the fact that it introduces the recurring characters of Lisa and Ricardo later seen again in the much better *The Horror of High Ridge*. None of this stopped me from writing a negative review of the adventure the first time that I revisited it in adulthood, however. The problem here is simply that the book's whole is less than the sum of its parts – it's not a meaningful story, just a random assortment of weird stuff. The more closely you study it, the less satisfying it becomes.

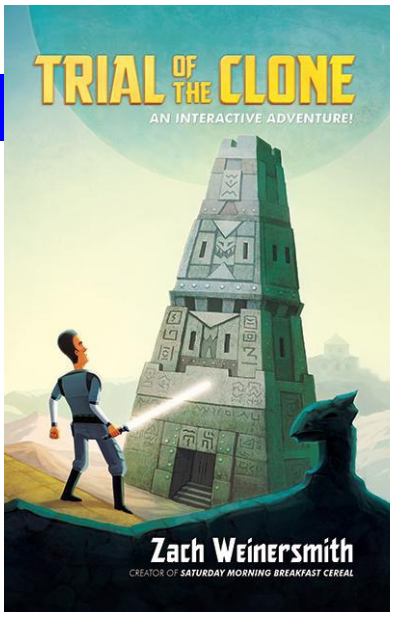
With that as the backdrop, I was interested to see how the new Graded Reader edition would approach this title. The 'Graded Readers' are abridged, simplified versions of classic *Choose Your Own Adventure* titles designed for use in English-as-a-second-language instruction. In addition to making the text more accessible, the revised editions also make the protagonists less childlike (removing references to crazy uncles, etc.) so that the books can appeal more directly to adults. In the case of *House of Danger*, the editor – Marcos Benevides – has also taken some liberties with the fundamental story in an effort to clean up the original mess. The main character now possesses an "inter-dimensional scanner" which can identify the dimensional gateways responsible for many unexplained phenomena... and, of course, the titular house is situated right on top of one such gateway! This obviously doesn't eliminate the randomness of the story, but it does help justify it, and the reduction of the book's length also helps to tighten things up.

In this revised form, *House of Danger* is still far from a brilliant example of the gamebook genre – there's only so much even well-executed editing can achieve – but it has been made slightly more engaging and accessible. If you have fond childhood memories of this story, perhaps revisiting it in this new edition will make the experience a little less disappointing. The only thing you're likely to miss from the original is the artwork, though even the illustrations here are acceptable, with less inconsistency than you'll find in some of the other recent *Choose Your Own Adventure* reissues. I can certainly think of worse ways to be introduced to a new language!

DEMIAN KATZ

Trial of the Clone

Author Zach Weinersmith **Publisher** Breadpig **Price** US$11.20
Web breadpig.com **Published** October 9th, 2012


TRIAL OF THE CLONE
AN INTERACTIVE ADVENTURE!
Zach Weinersmith
CREATOR OF SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CEREAL

There seems to be a trend amongst sci-fi gamebooks to have large amounts of humour injected into them, as seen in *Infinite Universe*, *Future Robot* and now this offering from Zach Weinersmith.

The book can basically be described as a parody of pretty much any sci-fi franchise you have ever seen mixed with both adult humour and childish humour.

The rules are laid out nice and clearly, each section having a short version to use as a reminder or to read if you have little patience.

You are given four stats – health, fighting, wits and charisma. You must use these stats in battles. Fighting battles involves picking a random number from 0-3 (by flicking through the book to a random page and using the number on that page) and adding it to your fighting score to get the amount of damage you deal to your opponent. Your foe does the same. Battles of charisma and wits involve picking three random numbers and adding them to the relevant stat. If you get over the number required, you win. If not, you lose. The book is split into five acts and if you lose, you only go back to the beginning of the act rather than the beginning of the book.

The story starts you off at the beginning of your life, describing how you are a clone created to meet the demand for orphans to adopt amongst the rich. However, being too 'meh' to be adoptable, you are instead sent to the Silene monastery to learn the ways of the goodside and the badside. From there, you take part in wars, meet the president and vice president and find out that you are part of a massive plot that goes back several years.

The mechanics of the game are part of the humour. It's possible to get a huge amount of wits playing a game in the library but you can also lose stats based on your choices. There is even one paragraph where you gain and lose 50 charisma twice! It should be said that it is good to get high scores in wits, fighting and charisma, but you should also expect them to go down for all sorts of weird and wonderful reasons.

You can also come across an impossible-to-win fight at one point, which is lampshaded by the book as it does not have a victory paragraph. You simply have to play out the fight then go to the 'if you lose...' paragraph. Despite certain fiddly bits, when you do seriously have to fight a battle, the tests are quite fair and you also may have a puzzle or two to solve as well.

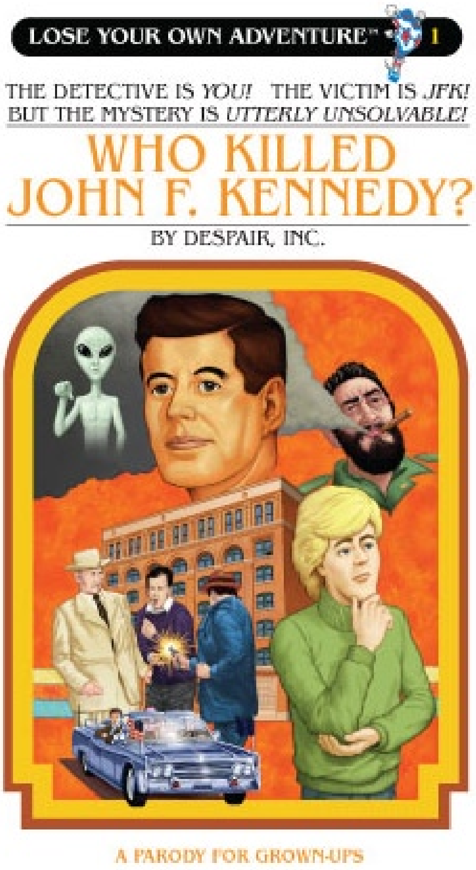
In fact, everything takes second place to the speedy stream of jokes, parody and satire. There are winning and losing outcomes, but the main aim of this book is to entertain and amuse using the vehicle of the gamebook format.

The book is well written and fast paced as you go from student to intergalactic hero quite quickly through a barrage of parodies and a hurricane of jokes. If you are in the mood for a lot of puerile humour, sci-fi parody and a gamebook where you don't really care about your choices as long as something interesting happens, then this is the gamebook for you.

STUART LLOYD

Lose Your Own Adventure: Who Killed John F. Kennedy?

Author Justin Sewell **Publisher** Despair, Inc.
Price US$12.00
Web www.despair.com **Published** June 6th, 2013


LOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE™ 1
THE DETECTIVE IS YOU! THE VICTIM IS JFK!
BUT THE MYSTERY IS UTTERLY UNSOLVABLE!
WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?
BY DESPAIR, INC.
A PARODY FOR GROWN-UPS

This book has been a long time in the making. First announced several years ago, when it failed to appear, I assumed it was either vaporware or a joke. However, it was neither; instead, the team responsible for the adventure was working hard to ensure that the finished product was as polished as possible. Even after such a long delay, the product had a bit of a bumpy launch – initial printings had some bugs and errors that have since been corrected, so you might want to stay away from used copies of this one. But it is here at last, and now you too can fail to solve the mystery of Kennedy's assassination!

Produced by Despair, Inc., a company probably best known for its 'Demotivators' posters, the premise here is simple: it's like a *Choose Your Own Adventure*, except that you can't possibly find a successful ending. A fairly novel idea, though the delay reaching the market meant that A. J. Lauer and Daniel P. Keidl's *Armageddon: Pick Your Plot*, which has a somewhat similar concept, hit the shelves first.

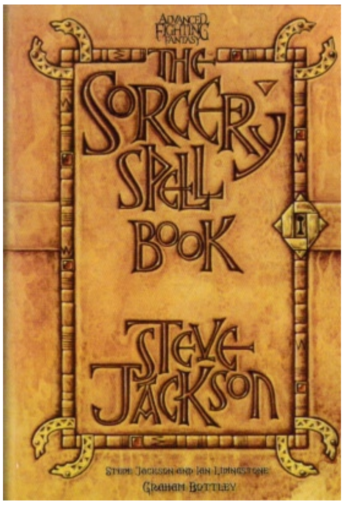
In any case, it would be easy enough to sell a book called *Lose Your Own Adventure: Who Killed John F. Kennedy?* solely on the basis of this jokey premise. Fortunately, the team behind this one has gone to quite a bit of effort to take the joke as far as it can go. First of all, the book design is quite nice, effectively mirroring the classic *Choose Your Own Adventure* look and feel, right down to the Paul Granger-style artwork (which is filled with visual nods to specific *Choose Your Own Adventure* images). Admittedly, mimicking the *Choose Your Own Adventure* style has been done before quite a few times and is not all that hard to do, but this is a particularly thorough effort, right down to the deflating balloon logo – a perfect symbol for the *Lose Your Own Adventure* concept. An impressive design still wouldn't carry the book very far if the text were boring, but quite a bit of care has gone into that as well – rather than simply making up a simplistic story about a child getting involved in the investigation of Kennedy's assassination, the authors have done their homework and the story is crafted to incorporate many of the historical details used to raise questions about the nature of the tragedy. And yes, there are endnotes.

For all its strengths, the book is certainly not perfect. At times, its effort to evoke a *Choose Your Own Adventure* atmosphere are a bit heavy-handed, while at the same time, all of its text is just a bit too densely-written to feel quite like an authentic *Choose Your Own Adventure*. While I smiled at some of the tributes, I never quite engaged with the text enough to be carried away by the plot or the humour. The book might have benefit from either stripping down the prose and truly embracing the *Choose Your Own Adventure* feel – some of the irony would be funnier if this felt more like it was actually written for children, especially if it could have captured the slight air of preachiness and condescension that some *Choose Your Own Adventure* books seem to give off – or from breaking the mould more aggressively and creating more of its own distinctive style. As it is, it's certainly not bad, and someone with less of a history of critically analyzing *Choose Your Own Adventure* books might not find the style as distracting as I did, but there is nonetheless room for improvement in future volumes.

Bottom line: a lot of effort has gone into this product and if you take a look at it, you'll probably experience a nice dose of nostalgia while also learning some things about the Kennedy assassination that you didn't already know (unless you're a conspiracy buff). It will be interesting to see where Despair, Inc. takes the series next; a Kickstarter for volume 2 (*The Glass Ceiling*) is now in the works.

A deluxe-sized paperback edition is also available for US$18.00.

DEMIAN KATZ



The Sorcery Spell Book

Authors Steve Jackson & Graham Bottley **Publisher** Arion Games **Price** £9.00
Web arion-games.com
Published 2013

Arion Games has released an updated version of *The Sorcery Spell Book*. When Steve Jackson's *Sorcery!* series was first published, the spellbook was a separate publication from the actual gamebooks. It was only in later editions that the spellbook was included at the back of the gamebooks.

Arion Games has published the spellbook with all of the original spell descriptions and artwork intact. On top of that, it has also included the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* descriptions of each spell. At the back of the book, you will find a reminder of the sorcery rules from the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* rulebook as well as new rules covering apprentice sorcerers, arch sorcerers and a brief description of sorcery from other countries in the Old World which could be used as inspiration for new sorcery spell lists.

The new *Sorcery Spell Book* is a must-have for those who missed buying the original or a director who deals with sorcerers as part of an *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* campaign.

STUART LLOYD

Défis Fantastiques: Le Jeu de Role

Author Graham Bottley **Publisher** Scriptarium **Price** €39.00
Web scriptarium.fr **Published** March 14th, 2013

Défis Fantastiques: le Jeu de Rôle has at least one thing going for itself: it does not try to present itself as something it is not. Unlike the *Lone Wolf* RPG, which was a mere copy of *Dungeons & Dragons* in a Magnamund setting, this is a direct adaptation of the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks – for better and for worse.

The first striking thing is the size of the book, especially when compared to its English counterpart. Although the bonus material is one of the reasons for that, it is mainly due to a completely different layout. With its bigger font, better-looking tables and titles and full-page colour illustrations at the beginning of chapters, it makes for a much more pleasant reading experience and allows for an easier search for information.

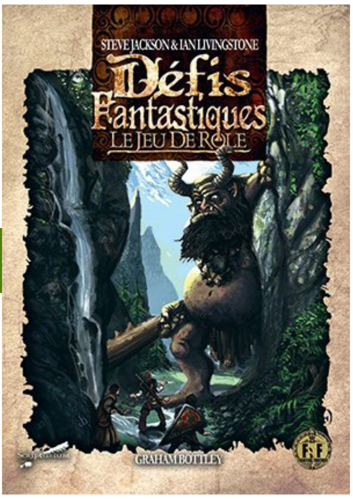
The book is meant to be an introduction to RPGs as a genre, in the same way as the majority of first books in any license. Hence, it includes a lot of basic information (a definition of role-playing, advice to the GM, description of skills such as running or jumping, and items such as plain swords) that will be of no interest to the seasoned player, who has already got it from other games. Of course, this cannot be held against *Défis Fantastiques: le Jeu de Rôle*, whose 'for dummies' approach is neither better nor worse than other games.

Défis Fantastiques: le Jeu de Rôle's rules are a perfect adaptation of the *Fighting Fantasy* system. Heroes are defined by four characteristics: their SKILL, STAMINA, LUCK and – for some of them – MAGIC. SKILL is used to deal with a wide array of circumstances, from fighting to jumping to observation to knowledge. Some magic wielders are allowed to use their MAGIC score instead of their SKILL for all mind-based throws and the system of Special Skills induces modifiers, but the fact remains that SKILL is first and foremost among characteristics. It can be felt as early as the character creation: no player choosing to avoid specialization in magic can start with a SKILL less than the maximum. Indeed, character creation tends to favour specialization, or even optimization, as the Magician example shows.

Special Skills are as classic as they get, dealing with weapons, movement (running, jumping, swimming etc), thievery (lock picking, disguise etc) and knowledge. The game sits about halfway between overspecialisation (a lot of skills, each one rarely used) and underspecialisation (a few skills, often used). Heroes can also select a Talent and get a bonus for a given type of action. This is not a bad idea per se, and Talents are quite well-balanced, but they are not very original, especially when compared to what can be found in some *Fighting Fantasy* books such as *Moonrunner*.

The fighting system follows the *Fighting Fantasy* rules, with the addition of damage variation according to the weapon or the armour. Once again, SKILL reigns supreme. A good point is that the fights are made much quicker than in the original books, since more damage can be inflicted in one punch while STAMINA remains more or less equivalent.

There is no class system: experience points are directly converted into characteristics points or skill points, which is a much more dynamic option.



After all these mundane rules, the second part of the book deals with the three kinds of supernatural powers: Minor Magic and Wizardry, which use MAGIC points, as in *The Citadel of Chaos*; Sorcery, which uses STAMINA points as well as components for some spells, as in the eponymous saga; and Priestly Abilities, which involve calling for help from the various gods of Titan. The most interesting of the three is Sorcery, since it is simple and faithful to the original books, with the hunt for components and the possibility of making great things relatively quickly. Wizardry has no real bad sides, but no real good ones either. Priestly Abilities are more debatable. It was a good idea to expand upon the idea of gods helping heroes as seen in some books (such as Libra in *Sorcery!*), but turning it into an entire school of magic does not seem quite right. Moreover, the bonuses it confers can be much stronger if the hero does not follow a strictly priestly orientation for his character, since Priests must endure a lot of limitations. And it is very odd that Sorcerers should not be allowed to receive the help of a god: Libra much?

So that was the rules. However, a RPG is not merely a pack of mathematical formulas: it is first and foremost a world to discover and enjoy. It should present places, characters and stories upon which the GM can build upon to create his own adventures. *Défis Fantastiques: le Jeu de Rôle* is something of a disappointment in this area. The chapter of the book describing Titan begins by telling the reader to check another book, not yet published in French, and only offers a few words about places that might be useful. The history and the geography of the world and its inhabitants are thus reduced to a mere glimpse, not even sufficient to entice the reader to delve deeper into it. Even the Elves and Dwarfs, which are playable races, are barely touched upon. At one point, the book encourages GMs to use their imagination and borrow ideas from other books or movies, and they had better do so, for they will not get any ideas from here. And the random dungeon generator which allows the GM to create a basic dungeon-crawling game in 10 minutes does not make up for it, nor do the two initiation scenarios.

As compensation for this lack of matter, the French edition offers several world maps, all beautifully made despite being in black and white only; however, being able to locate places I know nothing about does not help much. The pièce de résistance comes at the end, with a brand-new campaign of almost 100 pages offering more opportunities than simple dungeon-crawling. It is a long adventure, but easily adaptable, offering a good number of alternate paths if the GM or the players have some unorthodox ideas. The antagonist is not a big baddie who wants to rule the world, which goes beyond the clichés of the random dungeon generator. The campaign also provides a lot of information about iconic places from *Fighting Fantasy* history, such as the Citadel of Chaos, Darkwood Forest and Stonebridge, as well as less famous ones, such as Salamonis. The descriptions included in the campaign include more information about life on Titan than the rest of the book put together! The basic premise of the campaign is interesting, and the scenario is well crafted, without being outstanding. However, as far as adding new material is concerned, I would rather have had a real background section, with information easy to browse and retrieve when necessary.

Thus, *Défis Fantastiques : le Jeu de Rôle* might as well have been subtitled 'the Rule Book'. The system encompasses a lot of elements, some very good (a fast-paced fighting system, the sorcery rules) and some less (the priests), but it sorely lacks a thorough description of the universe itself. As such, it cannot really stand on its own, despite its ambitions, and no player will be able to visit the world of Titan if he has no other book to refer to.

ÉRIC SKARN

Blacksand

Author Graham Bottley **Publisher** Arion Games **Price** US$24.99
Web arion-games.com **Published** May 23rd, 2013

Arion Games is continuing its expansion of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* 2nd edition with a reprint of *Blacksand!*. Graham Bottley has taken the information from the original *Blacksand!* and other sources on Allansia and the world of Titan to create a more in-depth look at the City of Thieves and to also produce new rules for settlement generation, sailing and firepowder weapons that fit into the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* rules system.

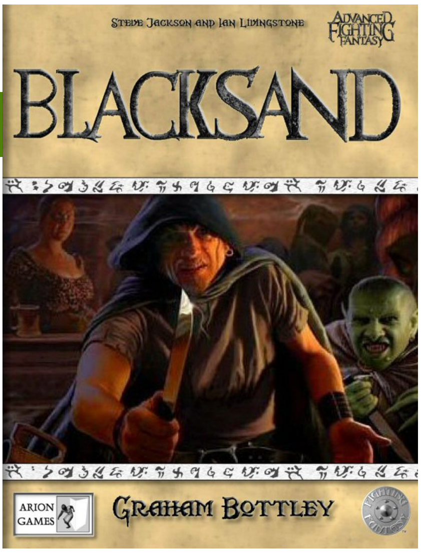
Now that we have three rule books for the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* system, it is clear that Graham Bottley must have decided on a streamlined rules system beforehand. This is apparent in *Blacksand*, where the rules for naval combat very closely resemble the mass-battle rules from the *Heroes' Companion*. Once again, we have a simple system for giving units stats based on the stats for individuals. Graham has also done the same for ships, giving them a STAMINA score and an ARMOUR score. This means that the Director and players do not need to learn a whole lexicon of new terms in order to move from individual combat to mass-battle combat to naval combat.

Graham has also included rules on how far ships travel, the effects of certain skills on sea travel, a price list for ships and their accessories and a list of new naval magical items. He has also included a new branch of specialist sorcery – naval sorcery, which has some powerful spells, though most are only able to be cast at sea or on large bodies of water. As well as giving more scope for character creation and development, this new branch of sorcery also reminds us that the 48 spells from the original rules are not the only type of sorcery available and that creative Directors and players can create their own spells and branches of sorcery.

Firepowder weapon rules are a welcome addition to *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*. These weapons have been touched upon in the original gamebooks, but generally ignored when it comes to player use (until *Howl of the Werewolf*), but Graham has given us rules for flintlock weapons, matchlock weapons, grenades, cannons and the infamous igneolite, mentioned in *Portal of Evil*, which is something I considered a nice touch and a sign of thorough research into the world of Titan.

The settlement-generation rules follow the same method as the dungeon- and wilderness-generation rules of the previous two books, where the Director rolls a number of six-sided dice based on the size of the settlement – then the nature of the building that the die represents is determined. Here Graham has incorporated the firepowder weapons rules from this book and new magic types from all books into the tables for determining business from the original *Blacksand!*. These rules will allow a Director to quickly create a settlement with a few places of interest – and maybe a few adventure hooks for a party of adventurers.

This then leads to the section on Port Blacksand itself. Graham has stayed faithful to the information of the original, but he has also obtained information from all the other books in the *Fighting Fantasy* series that feature Blacksand and added more information to the book, particularly about notable personalities such as the guildmasters of the Thieves' Guild, the noble families and the leaders of the various guilds. Each and every tavern now has a description and a quality rating and the information is peppered with adventure hooks, some from the original *Blacksand!*'s rumours table and some completely original.



The businesses and organisations also have ratings in keeping with Graham's holdings rules from the *Heroes' Companion*, allowing us to see how they are used and to also see what kind of organisation gets what rating.

The artwork includes illustrations from *City of Thieves* and *Dungeoneer*. It also features excellent brand-new maps, including a map of the whole city and a colour-coded map of each district from Steve Luxton so that every Director can know which street their adventurers are going to aimlessly blunder into.

So now that Arion Games have (sort of) reprinted the original three *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* sourcebooks, the question is where it goes from here. There is still *Beyond the Pit* to be released soon, Jonathan Hicks at the Farsight Blogger is preparing a sci-fi version of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* and there is even talk of a book on Salamonis. Many people have also requested for new adventures to be written.

The new *Blacksand* is definitely an improvement on the original in terms of content, focus and simplicity. Now, any Director sadistic enough to send their players to Blacksand has a wealth of information, NPCs and adventure hooks to use, bringing the place to life like never before.

You can buy a poster map of Blacksand separately for £5 from Arion Games.

STUART LLOYD

Allansia
Défis Fantastiques

Allansia Map

Artist Steve Luxton **Price** €20.00
Publisher Scriptarium
Web scriptarium.fr
Published March, 2013

Sneaking out alongside the French translation/adaptation of the main Arion Games *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* rulebook is this new map of Allansia from the same publishers.

It is a gorgeous full colour map presented at roughly A2 size. It comes on glossy, heavy paper with a nice feel to it. So the production is very nice, with my only slight complaint being that the map is somewhat dark in its choice of colour palette. Some yellows and oranges akin to Leo Hartas' maps might not have gone amiss.

Perhaps the most eye-catching detail to this map is that it boasts new material from two sources. It makes use, with permission, of Jonathan Green's plans of Frostholm for the unpublished *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook *Saga of the Stormchaser*, as well as incorporating new details from Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone.

Currently the map is only available in French, but one can hope that they or Arion Games bring out an English language-version. Additionally, let's keep our fingers crossed that they follow up with maps of the Old World and Khul.

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

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Fighting Fantazine

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Six-Gun Friday

A *Fighting Fantasy* adventure by Gaetano Abbondanza.

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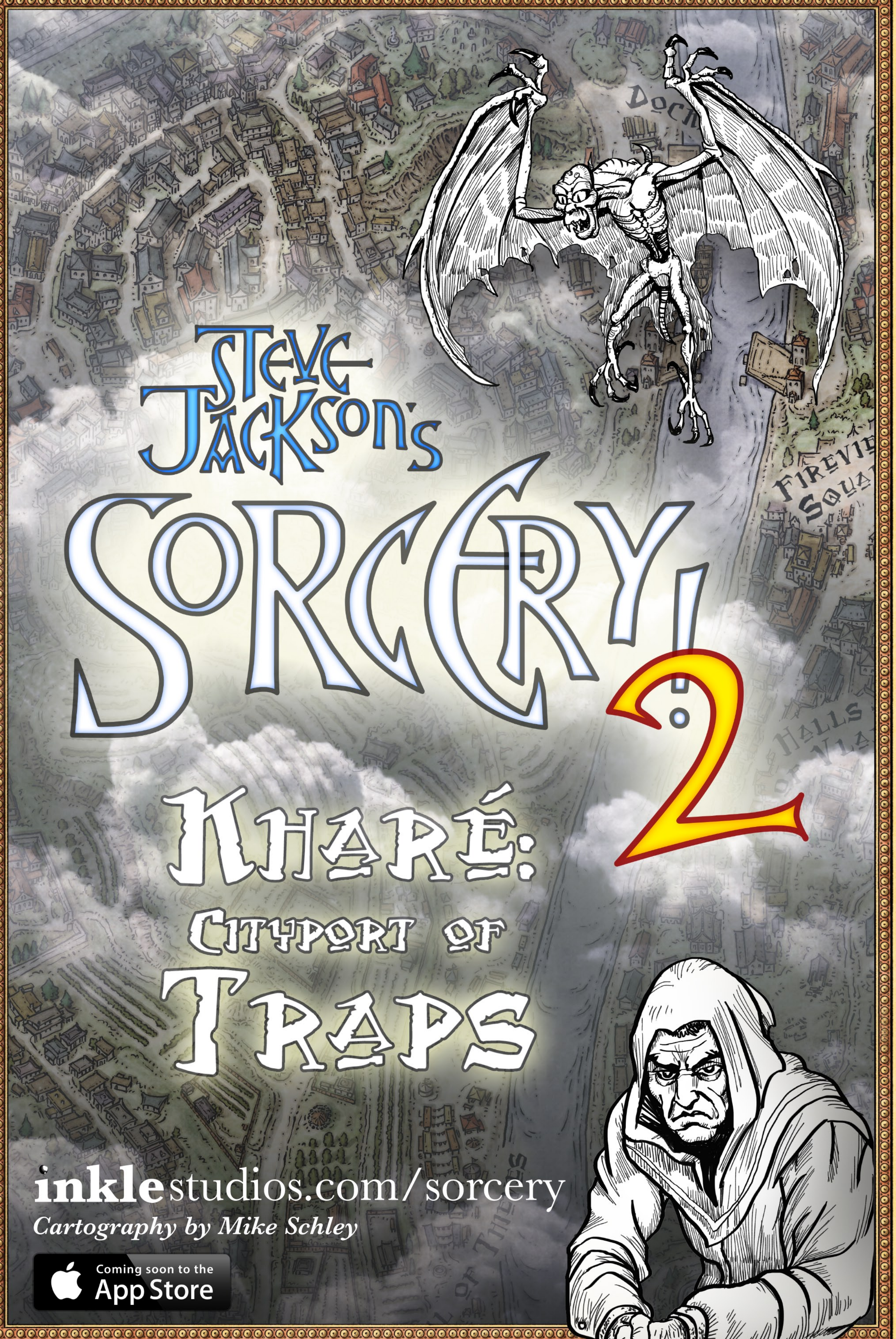

STEVE JACKSON'S

SORCERY! 2

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inklestudios.com/sorcery

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